

THE
MODERN WIFE.
A NOVEL.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. II.



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VOL. I.



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THE
MODERN WIFE.

L E T T E R X V .

To Lady WARWICK, from her Sister.

WEEP!—ah! my poor imprudent
sister, I have indeed done no-
thing but weep, since I received
your alarming letter—I will not re-
proach you for your past conduct. I
hope you now (I trust, ere it is too late)
see your error, and are determined to bid

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B

adieu.

adieu to your follies, your indiscretions; and by that means I also hope to hear you are once more happy in being restored to the affections of the best, the most amiable of men; and, if so, let me conjure you to hide nothing from him. — I tremble while you are any way in the power of that artful Colonel.

I suspect you have more enemies than you imagine, who watch your ruin. Fly then to your husband, your friend, your protector—make an ingenuous confession of this last piece of imprudence—he has too much honour, to suffer his wife's one moment to remain in danger.—You may be assured, he will instantly discharge your debt; and I know his generosity too well to think he will even utter the least reproach, when you acknowledge your fault, and seriously promise amendment; and, that you may be the better able to keep that promise, I think it would be
both



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both an agreeable and prudent scheme to pass a few months in the country.

Oh! my dear sister, if you knew how ardently I long to embrace, to see my dearest Jenny, I am sure you would for my sake take this proposal into consideration. Sir George is fond of the country; you once had, and I trust you will again acquire, a taste for its innocent pleasures. Perhaps my brother may get leave to accompany you. I am transported with the thoughts of seeing once more all my friends about me.

We were once a family of harmony and love. Are we not still so? do you not long to receive the blessing of a tender and affectionate mother, whose daily prayer is, that she may again be permitted to fold in her maternal arms her darling daughter?

B 2

You

You will here forget your modish follies, and again put yourself under the guidance of simple unaffected nature. Your virtues, your benevolence, which, by luxury, bad example, and continual dissipation, have so long lain dormant, will again expand themselves; and you will taste a purer, a more lasting joy, in cloathing the naked, than ever your exulting heart experienced on being the best-dressed belle at an assembly.

O Charity! thou Heaven-born virtue, thou art indeed thy own reward!—would it were as much in my power as in that of my Jenny's, to purchase the delight that flows from the practice of it!—How many sorrowing hearts might you gladden! how many prayers might you cause to be poured out for you at the throne of grace!—This is indeed to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.

Ah!

Ah! what will your modish fine ladies, as you call them, have to answer for, at the last solemn day, for having dissipated their fortunes, ruined their husbands, and neglected their families, by that odious, that unwomanly vice, gaming!—Unwomanly, I say.—Does it become their delicate frames, to turn night into day? Should those faces, where smiles and soft complacency ought to dwell, be distorted with the masculine, or rather diabolical, passions of rage, avarice, anxiety, and despair?—What an idea have I formed of your fashionable belles! if it be true, as it certainly is, that faces acquire a peculiar cast from the predominant passion, then what frightful creatures must they be!

“ And what a preacher is my grave
 “ sister!” you cry.—There’s no remedy,
 my dear.—I dare say, you expected a ser-

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mon; and I was unwilling to disappoint you. You are seldom troubled with them, I fancy; for, amongst all your amusements, I never hear a word of your going or having been at church. I suppose, you fine ladies consider it literally as *a day of rest*.—Oh! pardon my rusticity, I had forgot; it is, on the contrary, the day on which your people of very, very, high rank have their most brilliant routs—that they may shew a noble contempt for vulgar prejudices, the bible, priestcraft, and such unfashionable stuff!

Ah! Jenny, you, I trust, have not yet arrived at such a modish refinement; and that these lessons of piety imbibed in your infant years by one of the best of mothers are not yet effaced.

My dearest Harry has for some days been a good deal indisposed, which, together

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gether with your letter, has thrown me into a dejection of spirits, a more melancholy dejection than I ever before experienced. I have much more to say, both to you and about our beloved brother; but I must fly, to attend my Harry.

Farewell then, my dear sister; be virtuous, be prudent, be happy—'tis the ardent prayer of your Fanny.

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L E T T E R XVI.

From Captain WESTBURY to his Friend.

N O,—'tis a mere chimera, which leads us a wild-goose chase, from our cradle to our grave.—What? “pray, “if one may ask your worship.” Why, happiness, happiness, Harry; what else should it be but that *ignis fatuus*, which misleads and makes fools of us all; ~~but~~ I am grown wise at last, and fairly give up the chase.—Heighho!—to find the charmer of my heart, only to lose her, and that perhaps for ever!—What whining puppies does this blind urchin make of us!—I bluster, and rattle my chains, but cannot for my life shake them off; though my love is *hopeless*, in every sense of
of

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of the word—'tis not prudence only that forbids the bans, but a rival; yes, Harry, a happy rival, a favoured rival, has obtained the enviable prize for which I sigh in vain.

All the gentle winning softness of her behaviour to me was alone the effect of gratitude, for my having procured her my sister's protection. I was all rapture at the thoughts of so frequently seeing and conversing with her—but I was devilishly baulked—she might as well have been at Jerusalem as in the same house with me, for any thing I saw of her. She fled at my approach, and avoided me with such cruel circumspection as convinced me how little interest I had in her dear heart.

Sir George and my sister read me continual lectures about the imprudence, nay, the cruelty they called it, of pursuing

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the woman I pretended to love, both to her ruin and my own.—Ruin!—why, have not I a competency?—not indeed a fortune equal to her merit!

If she loved me—ridiculous! she does not—therefore, why suppose any thing about the matter?

In spite of all their sage remonstrances, I watched with such unremitted assiduity, that I at last found an opportunity to speak to her alone. I then, with all the eloquence I am master of, declared my passion.—She appeared greatly affected—but I was soon convinced her (as I at first thought them) favourable emotions proceeded only from compassion. Her hand trembled, while I pressed it to my beating heart—her colour went and came—she even suffered a gentle sigh to heave her lovely bosom.—Yet, when I besought her to pronounce my fate, this was her
cruel

cruel answer—"Honour, gratitude, prudence, all forbid me to encourage your passion. Can I so far forget what I owe to my generous benefactress, to whom your welfare is so dear? can I, indebted to your friendship as I am, so far forget your happiness? No, Sir, were I even inclined to favour your suit, never would I act so unworthy, so ungrateful a part.—Think not so meanly of me.—My esteem, my eternal esteem—"

"Esteem!" interrupted I passionately—"but my doubts are confirmed, and what Lady Warwick told me is, alas! but too true.—Be sincere, Madam," continued I mournfully; "tell me at once, that I may no longer dare to flatter myself with the least shadow of hope. Tell me ingenuously, that you have not a heart to bestow."

"If it will contribute to your peace,
"I will," added she, blushing frankly,
"own I have not."

"Enough, Madam," resumed I, sighing; "you shall no more be troubled
"with my fruitless, my unfortunate passion. I cannot indeed promise to conquer it; but I can suffer in silence.—
"May you be happy!" continued I, pressing her hand, "happy to the utmost of your wish, though my too
"fortunate rival is included in it! I am
"not a selfish lover. Believe me, your
"welfare, your felicity, is dearer to me
"than my own. Adieu; continue, as
"you in any measure think me worthy
"of it, to favour me with your esteem.
"Since, alas! I must hope for no more,
"permit me still the title of your friend;
"to the utmost of my power, I will study
"to deserve it."

She

She burst into tears—she even condescended to press my hand between hers. “—Farewell, Sir,” said she, in a faltering voice; “my prayers, my best wishes, my eternal gratitude—”

She could not proceed. She hurried from me, wiping her eyes, and endeavouring to hide her emotion.—What generous compassion!—I never in my life was so much affected.

I could not restrain myself. I threw my arms round her. I pressed her to my breast, intreated her pardon for giving her so much uneasiness; and, in the fondest, tenderest manner, endeavoured to calm her disturbance; but it only redoubled her tears, while her sweet face reclined on my bosom.

She

She suffered me for some moments to hold her in that endearing attitude; but at last, gently disengaging herself, "How sorry am I," said she softly, "that I, so infinitely indebted to you, should cause the man I esteem above all others a moment's pain! But forget me, Sir; or, if you think of me at all, let it be as of one who was not worthy of your least regard; perhaps this is the last time we shall ever meet. It is true, my heart is no longer mine to bestow; and it is equally true, that, were I at this moment mistress of it, it would again be his, and only his, who is in every respect worthy of my tenderest affections. But, notwithstanding this confession, which generosity prompts me to make, if the discovery will any way console you, be assured that you shall never see me the wife of another."

So

So saying, she left me fixed like a statue—almost without sense or motion—yet her last kind assurance gave me some degree of comfort. But how can I rely on such a promise? She owns my rival worthy of her tenderest affections. What then can prevent their union?—Her want of fortune!—Would to Heaven it were in my power to remove that obstacle, and promote her felicity, though at the expence of my own!

I threw myself into a chair, and began to reflect on her behaviour.—I could hardly account for her being so very much affected, since she did not love me. And then her moving adieu!—"This is perhaps," said she, "the last time we shall ever meet!"

Cruel maid! little did I at that moment suspect her purpose—but I was not long suffered

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suffered to continue in that happy ignorance.—I went again this morning to Sir George's.—I found only my sister at home—she was in tears—I eagerly asked the cause.—“ Ah! I have a thousand causes,” said she mournfully, “ I have, for one “ thing, lost my amiable Louisa—”

“ Lost her!” exclaimed I. “ Good
“ Heaven! what do you mean?”

“ 'Tis you, brother, I must reproach
“ for her loss. She saw your fruitless,
“ your imprudent passion—a passion
“ which she could neither return, nor
“ would her honour permit her to en-
“ courage.—She pitied your sufferings;
“ she feared the sight of her might feed
“ the hopeless flame.—Her grateful
“ heart would not suffer her to continue
“ in a place where she might cause unea-
“ siness, either to you or your friends.
“ She thought absence would be most
“ likely

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“ likely to extinguish your imprudent
“ passion.—In short, she this morning
“ bid me a tender adieu!—she would not
“ be prevailed on to make me the confi-
“ dent of her retreat. No one knows to
“ what place she is gone—she set off
“ about two hours ago, in a post-chaise—”

“ And could you suffer her to go?”
cried I, sinking into a chair. “ O my
“ God! what will become of her?—
“ friendless, destitute as she is!—But I
“ will never rest till I discover—”

“ Fruitless would be your search,
“ brother,” interrupted she, “ and as
“ needless.—Do you think Sir George
“ —do you think I—would let her go,
“ without making some provision for her?
“ Be satisfied; though she would not ac-
“ cept as much as I could wish, she has
“ yet what is sufficient to maintain her
“ genteely in retirement.

“ Don’t

“ Don’t look so solemn, brother ;
“ don’t give way to that lover-like dejection—you ought rather to comfort me
“ —’tis the least thing you can do, since
“ you have deprived me of so sweet a
“ friend.”

I made no answer. I walked up and down the room. I was almost distracted, stunned with the unexpected blow.

While in this agitation, Miss Percy came in. My sister had hardly dried her tears ; and my countenance sufficiently expressed the situation of my mind.—The amiable girl caught the infection of our sorrow ; and, ere she knew the cause, a tear stole down her sweet enquiring eyes, which she directed alternately to my sister and me, as if to ask the reason of our grief.

At

At last, looking up in my face with the most seducing softness, "Forgive my
 " curiosity ; you are uneasy—may I not
 " know the cause?—Tell me, my dear
 " Lady Warwick, what is the matter
 " with Mr. Westbury?—Your mother!
 " your sister!" with an anxious air—
 " no bad news, I hope."

I took her hand—"We have lost—" I
 could not proceed. I left her abruptly,
 and retired to a window. She followed
 me, and laying her hand on my arm,
 " Dear Mr. Westbury, you cannot con-
 " ceive how you alarm me. Will you
 " not tell me? who have you lost?"

" Louisa!" cried I with emotion.

" Louisa!" repeated she. " Good
 " Heavens! how do you mean?"

" She

“ She is gone—left me,” said I, sighing. “ Could you,” added I, pressing her hand, “ have had the cruelty to “ leave the man who adored you? could “ you, my gentle Juliet, have left any “ one, as she has done me, to misery “ and despair?”

“ No, indeed, Mr. Westbury, I should “ be extremely sorry to see any one in “ misery; and I am sure I would not for “ the world have been the cause of “ yours;” she blush’d, and, hesitating a little, “ but poor Louisa, she could not “ help it, I dare say; or she would not “ have left her friends that I know she “ so highly esteems.”

“ I am not amongst the number,” resumed I mournfully; “ ’tis me she flies “ from, ’tis me only she wishes to shun.”

“ You!

“ You! Mr. Westbury. I am sure
“ she had the greatest regard for you.”

“ Ah! my agreeable flatterer!”

“ Indeed it is no flattery, Mr. West-
“ bury. Is it possible she should not”—
adding, after a short pause—“ when she
“ was so much indebted to your friend-
“ ship? I call you to witness, Lady War-
“ wick; did she not always speak of
“ your brother in the most favourable
“ manner?—but you men are never
“ satisfied,” continued she, smiling and
tapping my shoulder—“ you wanted to
“ have her in love with you, I warrant.
“ Do you not consider,” added she,
“ that,” sighing, “ love is involuntary;
“ you would not love her if you could
“ help it; would he, Lady Warwick?”

“ Don’t talk to me, my dear,” an-
swered she; “ I am not well; give me
“ leave

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“ leave to indulge for a while my melancholy reflections.”

“ Or rather, my dear Lady Warwick,” cried she, rising, and throwing her pretty arm round her neck, “ give me leave to try at least to dispel that melancholy. “ Happy Louisa! to be so lamented!” stealing a glance at me. What innocence! what artless modesty!—There never was a more engaging girl.

If I had a heart—are you not sick of the everlasting repetition of that word?—But forgive me; ’tis the very last time your patience shall ever be exercised on this subject; for I positively, from this moment, bid an eternal adieu to hearts, darts, flames, and the whole store of Cupid’s artillery; and, to oblige you still more, I bid you adieu also.

L E T-

L E T T E R XVII.

From Lady WARWICK to her Sister.

A Few lines, my kind sister, a little to remove your anxiety.—I am exceedingly low-spirited; but not quite so miserable as when I last wrote.

I have not time to give you the particulars of my reconciliation with Sir George. To own the truth, I fear it was not on his side quite so cordial as I could wish, tho' I made all the submission any reasonable man could desire—but I am convinced, with you, that I have some secret enemies—secret! do I say? No—that Lady G—— is so, has long ceased

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ceased to be a secret, as well as her scandalous fondness for my husband.

Heighho!—no more *bagatelle!* no more *gaieté de cœur!*—you would not know me again.—You repeatedly bid me return to my former self; but at present I am neither one thing nor t'other.—Louisa has left me too—'twas a noble, generous, amiable creature.

Sir George is stately—I very meek, and very filly—he knows nothing of the Colonel's affair yet. I cannot, I dare not tell him, for the life of me. O, these lordly men! did I ever think I should stand in awe of such wretches, or be under such subjection!—This is the precious fruits of matrimony! A pretty hand have I made of myself, truly!

The vile Colonel paid me a visit this morning. He knew I was at home, for
his

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his sister had just left me; nor durst I, at any rate, situated as I am, be denied to him; it would look as if I wanted to shun him, lest he should remind me of my debt.

O that abominable gaming!—Well, in he fluttered, adorned for conquest; his address so gentle, so insinuating! I was very cool, very reserved, and very, very stupid.

He exerted all his wit to amuse me, but it would not do. He then took it into his head that I was ill, and instantly became all soft and languishing; sigh'd, fix'd his eyes tenderly on me, entreated me to tell him the cause of my dejection: "Was he not my friend? did he
" not glory in that title? was not my
" happiness dearer to him than his own?"

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In this manner he ran on—but not a word of the money. I never was more embarrassed in my life.

While he was thus pestering me with his tormenting assiduity, and at the very moment he had seized my hand, which I was struggling to disengage; who think you my evil genius brought suddenly upon us, to be witness to this pretty scene, but Sir George!

I blush'd, not from guilt, but surprize. He gave me a look perfectly intelligible, bow'd slightly to the disconcerted Colonel, and flung himself into a chair.—You never saw three more foolish figures than we made.—At any other time, I should have burst out a laughing, but was then in no very laughing humour.

We

We were for some time silent, the Colonel molding the corner of his hat, and very busy in adjusting his cockade. At last, after a short hem, to clear his voice,
 “ Was you in the park this morning,
 “ Sir George? ’Tis a fine day; I fancy
 “ there would be a good deal of com-
 “ pany.”

Sir George answered him with more politeness than I expected—but a pause ensued—what was next to be said?—
 “ There is no news stirring, I think; the
 “ town is very empty and very stupid.”
 You know whose speech this was —
 “ Have you seen the new comedy, Ma-
 “ dam?”

“ No, Sir; and I wish I could get off
 “ my engagement for to-night. I have
 “ not the least curiosity to see it.”

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“ Why, are you going to the play
“ to-night, Madam?” —— This is Sir
George’s speech.

Now for mine.—“ I promised—but
“ ’tis quite indifferent to me whether I
“ go or stay.”

Now Sir George again—“ And quite
“ indifferent to me too, Madam.”

Now the Colonel—“ O, you must po-
“ sitely go, Madam; it will amuse you;
“ you are out of spirits this morning.”

A pause—Sir George looking at me,
with some degree of tenderness, as much
as to say, “ O Jenny, Jenny, &c.”

But enough of this nonsense. I must
attend my toilet.—Never in my life did I
think

think of appearing with so little pleasure. The strangest dejection hangs about me that you can conceive. What on earth is the matter with me? This vile play!—I wish I had not consented to go—but they pestered me, they teased me to death.—Lady G—— of my party too! Ah! what hypocrites does this good breeding, this fashionable politeness, make us!—But I am positively determined to break off by degrees all intimacy with her—nay, I am determined to follow your advice, and propose your country scheme to Sir George—but not till he thinks fit to condescend a little to lay aside some of his stately airs.—When he resumes his former self, why then, Fanny, I'll try—ah! Lord!—I'll try to be very, very good. After which reformation on both sides, we whip into our coach and fix—“Drive on,” says my Ladyship—Farewel, dear London; welcome, retirement, friendship, love, and

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harmony. I leave the fine Lady behind me ; instead of which he folds to his delighted heart the lovely, artless, fond, the tender Jenny he brought up with him ; and carries down to her expecting friends the very rustic country girl he took from them—her person, her manners, her heart, her affections, neither better nor worse than those of Jenny Westbury.

You will see her again, rambling about the fields, chatting to her rural neighbours ; and, as she used to do, romping with your Harry.

“ Happy scenes of gay delight !

“ Warm my breast, and sooth my care.”

Now am I as eager to go into the country as ever I was to come out of it—All things change, but my affections
for

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for you.—This teasing Abigail of mine!

—“Your Ladyship will be too late—

“the hair-dresser waits — would you

“chuse to wear your lilach and silver,

“or your new negligée?”

The duce is in her tongue—I come—
adieu, adieu, and again adieu, with a sigh
as long as my arm.

L E T T E R XVIII.

Sir GEORGE WARWICK to Mrs.
MANWARING.

'TIS the most wretched of mankind that now addresses you, my amiable, worthy Mrs. Manwaring.—O that lovely fallen angel, your sister! had she had half your worth—I am too much softened to proceed. I must give vent to my emotions.

How shall I prepare you for the melancholy tidings? — But you must—yes, in justice to myself, I must relate the circumstances of this horrid affair—yet do not let me deprive the poor unhappy fugitive of your protection. Injured as
I am

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I am in the most tender point, I cannot hate her. Nay, my heart at this moment melts with the tenderest compassion. —Imprudent, unfortunate girl!

If she is with you, Madam, treat her kindly, for my sake; and, for her worthy mother's sake, conceal her shame. I may add, for my honour, for the honour of her family, conceal what I would not intrust to any creature breathing but yourself.

How have I struggled to master my passion, my just resentment, that I might conceal the fatal adventure from the world!

Where shall I begin?—I am almost distracted.—You was once, Madam, the confident of my lost, my ruin'd Jenny. She might perhaps tell you, that I was not so happy as I fondly expected, in the
C 5 possession

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possession of a woman so exquisitely lovely.—But I still hoped my indulgence, my unabated love, would in time reclaim her from the eager pursuit of every fashionable folly.—She was imprudent—but, ah! how little did I, till fatally undeceived, suspect her virtue.

She has no doubt mentioned in her letters her favourite Colonel——that wretch, on whom, tho' prudence at present forbids me, I will one day take vengeance for my injured honour.—Often have I expressed my displeasure at the encouragement she gave him—but in vain!

On Monday, fatal day to my peace! entering her dressing room unexpectedly, I found them together.—He had hold of her hand—she blush'd—he was in the utmost confusion—but still this was no absolute

absolute proof of her guilt, and I forbore to shew any resentment.—She was engaged to go to the play that night.—Business with my steward—I have lately, from her extravagance, had a good deal more business with him than I could wish—but O, what is my fortune?—had she only dissipated that!—had she but spared my honour and her own!—I had been comparatively happy.

She was hardly gone, lovely as an angel, my eyes following her till out of sight, when I received a letter from Lady G—. Read it, Madam; and think what a husband, a lover, must feel.

L E T T E R.

“ I don’t know whether your pre-
 “ sent doubts are not even, upon the
 “ whole, worse than certainty—’tis a
 “ lingering death.—Shall I put you out
 “ of pain?—Would you had as much
 “ compassion for somebody else!

“ Your wife—yes, I will call her your
 “ wife for once, and that with a sort
 “ of malicious pleasure—told me in the
 “ morning, that we must not expect to
 “ see you at the play—that you had as-
 “ sured her you could not be there—
 “ and we all know how tenacious you
 “ are of your word!

“ Well, well, honest friend, some of
 “ us at least can very well dispense with
 “ your company.—I know what an in-
 “ credulous

“ credulous provoking wretch you are ;
 “ I know how little you believe those
 “ hints, which out of a tender regard
 “ for your honour, which out of friend-
 “ ship, you may add love too if you
 “ will, for I am incapable of artifice or
 “ disguise, I have frequently dropped ;
 “ but, if you have any curiosity, I can
 “ to-night furnish you with ocular de-
 “ monstration of those truths—yes, I
 “ can convince you how unworthy the
 “ creature is, whom you so much prefer
 “ to me—that wife—that boasted virtu-
 “ ous wife, for whom I am despised. Did
 “ I not tell you, she would revenge me
 “ on you, for my slighted love ?

“ My brother—you start—be calm—
 “ endeavour for once to master your too
 “ lively passion — recollect yourself—
 “ and for once suffer me to direct and
 “ govern your motions.

“ Did

“ Did she tell you (ah! can I doubt
 “ it? so frank, so ingenuous a creature,
 “ you know!) of her play debt?—only a
 “ few hundreds, a trifle!—My brother
 “ is generous—but, as it is a debt of
 “ honour, and she a woman of honour,
 “ you may be sure she will discharge it.
 “ —I over-heard a little tender *tête à*
 “ *tête*.—Every thing is settled; she is
 “ not of our party to-night—but per-
 “ haps they may meet after the play.—
 “ No harm in that, you know, in the
 “ way of business.

“ If you chuse to be a witness to this
 “ meeting, follow my instructions; be
 “ at C——’s, under the Piazzas, a few
 “ minutes before the play is over. Keep
 “ yourself concealed till I send you no-
 “ tice of their approach—then do as
 “ you think proper. I leave you to your
 “ own devices—no, I retract that liberty
 “ —in

“ —in the name of Heaven, I entreat
 “ you to govern your passion. Be calm,
 “ do not expose yourself. Spare my
 “ brother; and O, have some little
 “ regard to the safety of the man I
 “ adore.—Adieu, we are going.—Be
 “ cautious—be prudent—and be grate-
 “ ful to

“ YOUR CAROLINE.”

I shall not pretend to describe my
 rage, my distraction, on reading this
 cursed letter—but, ere the fatal moment
 arrived, when I was to be a witness to
 my shame, my irreparable dishonour, I
 had reasoned myself into some degree of
 composure, determined to act as few
 husbands would have done in so madden-
 ing a situation.—About ten, I drove to
 Covent-Garden. I quitted my chariot
 at some distance from C——’s, ordering
 it to wait till my return. I went into a
 private

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private room, threw myself into a chair, more dead than alive—the rack would have been a bed of down to my then torturing situation—In less than a quarter of an hour, a waiter brought me a note. It contained only these words—“ Come, “ and see.”

I rushed out of the room, and was hurrying down stairs.—O, Mrs. Manwaring, think, think, what I must feel, when half way down I met that villain the Colonel, leading my — no—she is no longer mine—I renounce her for ever.—She held a handkerchief to her face with one hand, while he pressed the other in his.—I am astonished how my spirits could support me in so trying a scene; but, though inwardly distracted with rage, love, hatred, and revenge, I struggled so effectually to master my passion, that I accosted them without any visible resentment.

I do

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I do not remember what I said; for I had hardly time to open my lips, ere the audacious creature, disengaging her hand from her cursed paramour, seized mine. "O Sir George, how rejoiced am I to see you! how fortunate is your being here! I have met with the most alarming accident. I have not yet recovered my fright.—I am obliged to you, Sir," turning to the agitated, the disconcerted Colonel; "I have now found a protector, and need give you no further trouble."

I had not power to interrupt her, astonished at her impudent effrontery.

"Then, Madam," stammered the wretch, "I will leave you to the care of your husband, for I fancy I have already outstaid my engagement.—Your Lady has been much frightened, Sir
"George,"

“ George,” addressing himself to me ;
 “ she will tell you the particulars ; I
 “ have not time.”

In this manner they ran on, and might for hours.—My senses were all benumb’d.—I was petrified with grief and astonishment—but at last, a little recovering myself—you will be amazed at my calmness, but my honour was concerned ; I should have injured it more by yielding to my just resentment, than by affecting a tame credulity—but I will be revenged—yes, by Heaven, though for a time I stifle my rage, it shall ere long break out with redoubled fury on the villain who has thus irreparably injured me. I shall find some pretence ; but, for my own sake, I must be tender of her reputation ; our quarrel must appear to be from some other cause.—My whole care is, if possible, to conceal both her shame and my own from the knowledge of the world.

This

This motive will account for my extraordinary behaviour on the occasion.—“ I am much obliged to you, Colonel,” said I, and even forced a smile—“ but ’tis the province of the brave, to succour the fair. I hope I shall see you to-morrow; and, when I know the particulars of this terrible disaster, I shall be the better able to make you proper acknowledgements.”

He stared, and, I believe, did not very well know how to interpret my words; but, to remove all doubts, I shook him by the hand, wished him good night, and throwing my arm round my—ah! what shall I call her?—“ My chariot is at the corner of the street,” continued I; “ throw your handkerchief about your head, for fear of cold, and we will walk to it.”

Think

Think what a dissembler! think how I conquered my passion!—The complaisant rascal, now convinced that all was as he could wish, and no doubt laughing in his sleeve at her easy credulous husband, accompanied us to the carriage, handed her in, and to appearance parted the best friends in the world.

No sooner were we alone, than the impudent hypocrite threw her arms round my neck.—“ My dear kind Sir George,
“ how you charm me by your behaviour! I feared you would have been
“ surprized, that you would have been
“ offended, at seeing me in such a place,
“ and in such company; but, indeed, I
“ trust, I never gave you cause to suspect
“ my honour—but this noble confidence
“ of yours will render me still more studious to deserve it. I am now determined, believe me I am, to endeavour
“ at

" at least to be all you wish. I see my folly
 " —I hope ere it is too late—and now
 " heartily despise those empty pleasures
 " I once so eagerly pursued.—I am sick
 " of the town.—If you love me, dear
 " Sir George, pressing my passive hand,
 " take me from this scene of noise and
 " folly. Depending on your indulgence,
 " I have already taken leave of some of
 " my friends. All their raillery cannot
 " change my purpose, if you approve of
 " it; let us, dear Sir, let us retire into
 " the country. My mother, my sister,
 " expect me. I have ventured to pro-
 " mise them a visit. I hope you will con-
 " sent to my scheme."

In this manner she ran on, not having
 as yet, I suppose, quite collected the par-
 ticulars of the pretty story she was
 hatching, to impose upon my (as she had
 reason to believe) easy credulity.

I stopped

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I stopped her at last.—“But, my
“ dear,” with an ironical air, “you have
“ very soon forgot your late fright, and
“ have very soon got the better of it,
“ methinks, considering it was so very
“ alarming an adventure!”

“How could I remember it?” cried the
artful dissembler. “Joy at our unex-
“ pected and so seasonable meeting gave
“ me such inexpressible pleasure, that I
“ remembered nothing but that I was
“ again happy in the protection of my
“ affectionate husband. But do not think
“ you are to escape without listening to
“ my doleful adventure.”

“Spare me at present;” said I, “’tis
“ sufficient that you have received no
“ injury, that you are safe.”

I could not submit to be, though only
in appearance, further imposed upon. I
therefore

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therefore added, to save her a falsehood, and myself the pain of hearing it, that I was not very well; that I had a violent head-ach; and could neither speak, nor listen to her tale.

She, hypocrite as she is, and practised in dissimulation, affected the utmost concern, and still more afflicted my tortured heart, by her tender, her insinuating caresses.—O, had she been sincere! had she, ere I knew her treachery, exerted thus her power of pleasing, her fond endearments, what raptures would they have excited in return! But I now sicken at her touch, and shrink from her polluted embrace!

At last, the carriage stopped. I begged her to go immediately to her apartment. She left me, bathed in crocodile tears; for my indisposition, as she would have had me believe.

I fol-

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I followed her soon after. What a night did I pass, tormented with her now hated endearments! I turned from her, pretending to be asleep; but neither of us closed our eyes.--She sigh'd frequently. Well might she sigh! Ungrateful as she is, is it possible she should not feel some little remorse, for having ruined both herself and the man who once so fondly adored her?

Next morning I wrote the following note to Lady G—— :

“ I thank you, Madam; you have indeed dispelled my doubts, my injurious doubts, of my wife's virtue; a virtue which triumphs over all the artifices and malice of her enemies. I know the whole affair, more perhaps than you, my kind officious friend, imagined. Every thing is cleared up
“ to

“ to me; and that, as you promised, by
 “ ocular demonstration. I could laugh
 “ at the solemn face your friendly hints
 “ now and then forced me to put on.
 “ But know, Madam, that her happy
 “ husband has all along been the confi-
 “ dent of every secret of her heart, her
 “ debt of honour not excepted; but,
 “ to own the truth, it was not till now
 “ quite so convenient to discharge it. To-
 “ day, I hope, your brother will give me
 “ the pleasure of his company to dinner;
 “ I have sent to request that favour, and
 “ then the affair will be settled.—If your
 “ Ladyship is not better engaged, I dare
 “ say my Jenny will be equally glad of
 “ your company. She is going into the
 “ country for a few days—I cannot pre-
 “ vail on her to stay till I accompany
 “ her.—Business will detain me some
 “ time longer in this dear town, which
 “ is now become so indifferent to her.
 “ An amazing change! But you Ladies

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“ are too fond of variety, for me to
 “ wonder at any proof of your incon-
 “ stancy.—Her friends are importunate
 “ —she, ever eager in any thing that
 “ happens to be the present whim, is
 “ all impatience to vary the scene.—I all
 “ indulgence. She goes then—come,
 “ and bid her adieu.—You bid me be
 “ grateful—I am highly so; for your
 “ officious friendship is in some measure
 “ the cause of my present happiness.

“ Your’s, &c.”

See, Mrs. Manwaring, how I edify by
 good example, and what an adept I am be-
 come in dissimulation!—Soon after I had
 dispatched this artful note, your sister
 joined me. What anguish did the sight
 of her—lovely, O, how inexpressibly
 lovely!—cause me!—hardly could I
 conceal my emotions—pity, love, rage,
 and resentment, tortured my distracted
 heart by turns—but I had not yet effected
 my

my purpose, and struggled still to keep the command of my passions.

She would now have forced me to hear her plausible tale, which I had given her sufficient leisure to invent—but hardly one syllable did I give the least attention to, far less believe. I cannot therefore pretend to repeat what I cannot properly be said to have heard, so very little attention did I give.—You have no doubt by this time had the account from herself.—Ah! what can she say in her defence?—circumstances are too evidently against her. Would she have exposed her honour as she has done, had she any regard for it?—Would he, of all men in the world, have been the person to whom, if she had had the least prudence, she would have submitted to be obliged? would she have concealed it from me, if she did not wish to pay it in her own way,

when she knew my fond indulgence, when she knew she might command my fortune to the utmost farthing, when she knew I was incapable of reproaching her?

O no, no, no—my dishonour is but too plain.—I have long had reason to suspect her partiality for the wretch. I am fully convinced, she is lost, ruined; and I, her unfortunate husband, miserable for ever.

She renewed her proposal of going into the country. Conscious of her guilt, she submitted even to that disagreeable expedient, the more firmly to deceive me into a belief of her innocence. She over-acted her part; for, notwithstanding my behaviour, she thought it impossible I should be so very easy, so very credulous a fool, as not to entertain some

some suspicions, if she did not take more than ordinary pains to remove those doubts she was sensible I should indulge.

That I might in my turn wound her faithless heart the deeper when I threw off the mask, I affected to return her caresses, of which I had never seen her so lavish.—I even launched out on the tranquil pleasures we should taste at Rose-Hill. I painted, with all the eloquence I was master of, the charms of love, friendship, and retirement. I laid down an agreeable plan for our amusement while in the country—talked of her friends—of the delightful meeting between her fond mother and her—of your inexpressible joy.

She threw her arms round my neck. She listened with rapture ; triumphing, no doubt, in having so effectually made me a dupe.—Was I not cruel, when I

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own I enjoyed the prospect of dashing her from her imaginary height of happiness down to the lowest abasement?

Lady G—— and her villain of a brother accepted my invitation—nor were they all I had invited. Lady Betty Percy, her three daughters, Lord V—, Mrs. C—, Lesley, Sir Edward W—, and your brother, were likewise our guests.

I avoided all particular conversation with Lady G—. Her brother I took aside before dinner—made an apology for not sooner discharging my wife's debt—hoped he would excuse my not mentioning it before; but added, with a smile, that it was not convenient—expressed my sense of the obligation, and, without giving the staring puppy time to answer, putting bank notes into his hand equal to the sum he had lent her, I took him by the arm, and led him back to the

the company. Every body was in high spirits, and never did I see your sister so agreeably lively — every heart was at ease but that of her almost distracted husband; but I put a force upon my nature, ad to the last dissembled my misery.

The cursed Colonel, no doubt astonished at my conduct, and convinced I was the most credulous fool in England, thought he need observe no measures with a fellow who would not give credit even to his senses — play'd off all his airs and graces — and made love to my Devil even before my face.

What a tempest raged in my soul! — yet I affected the utmost gaiety. My wife, my torment, talked of her country jaunt. Your worthy brother — ah! may he never know her shame! — expressed his pleasure that she had at last resolved on so laudable a plan.

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He has for some time—did he know all!—may he never know it!—greatly disapproved her conduct; and privately gave me joy on so favourable a symptom of her reformation.

My friend Lesley was no less pleased, that I had at last prevailed on her to quit a scene of extravagance and dissipation, which has already injured my fortune.

The day passed in this manner. Every one appeared satisfied, and left us in the highest good humour. Even Lady G—, willing to play the hypocrite in her turn, whispered me, as I was leading her to her carriage, “Can you forgive the effect
“ of envy and unrequited love? Pity
“ me,” added she, pressing my hand,
“ and let me see you to-morrow. I have
“ something to say to you—nothing that
“ will

“ will destroy your present happiness
“ and security.”

I made no answer but a bow, and returned to the drawing-room.

The moment I entered, your sister flew into my arms—“ O, Sir George, “ what a happy day has this been! but “ you do not take notice what a good “ creature I am become; how prudent, “ how tender, how meek, how obliging! “ I already begin to practise my country “ airs, and have, you see, quite laid aside “ the fine Lady—I expect, let me tell “ you, your compliments of congratulation on the occasion.”

“ You are indeed,” said I, pushing her from me, “ amazingly changed in my “ opinion — surprizingly changed,” repeated I, looking sternly on her—“ But “ tell me, Jenny, do you think it possible

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“ fible my love should admit of increase?
 “ Have I not been one of the most doat-
 “ ing husbands in the world? Did I not
 “ love you almost to idolatry? Did I not
 “ study to gratify every wish of your
 “ heart?—nay, did I not study to pre-
 “ vent its wishes? — Did I think any
 “ thing too good for you? Was not
 “ my heart, my fortune, my will, my
 “ affections, my very life, at your dispo-
 “ sal? Did I know what joy was, when
 “ you did not share it? Was you not
 “ the pride of my fond heart, the de-
 “ light of my eyes, the sole object of
 “ my desire, the mistress of my fate?
 “ Did I ever controul you? Did I ever
 “ seek to limit your expences? Did I
 “ ever murmur, or reproach you? Did
 “ I ever attempt to restrain your plea-
 “ sures?—And tell me then, ungrateful
 “ girl,” added I, in a voice scarcely ar-
 “ ticulate, “ how have I deserved so un-
 “ generous

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“generous a return for all my unbounded
“fondness?”

I paused, and fixed my eyes on her face, as she stood supporting herself on the back of a chair, pale, trembling, and ready to sink with shame and surprise.

“O, Jenny, Jenny,” resumed I, deeply sighing, “what have you done? Imprudent, unfortunate girl!—Have I deserved such treatment? Did you not freely, voluntarily, give me your hand? It was not arbitrary parents that forced you to a joyless union.—Did you not swear you loved me? and ah! how oft, painfully-pleasing reflection! have you renewed that vow?”

“Why did you so long deceive me? or why can you not deceive me still? But ’tis past, the dear delusion is for ever fled,

“and I am wretched to the utmost of
 “your wish.—Yes, your utmost hatred
 “could not wish me more than the mi-
 “sery I already suffer. In what does
 “my rival so much excel me—that trium-
 “phant villain, who has ruined us both
 “—that wretch—that Colonel?”

“Colonel!” repeated she in a faint
 voice — “but my death,” raising her
 eyes, and clasping her hands, “my in-
 “nocence—” the last word died upon
 her tongue—and she sunk down senseless
 on the floor.

I flew to her assistance. My resent-
 ment, my revenge, my just indignation,
 vanished in an instant, when I beheld
 the most lovely creature in nature pale
 as death, stretched on the ground, her
 charming hands still clasped in each
 other, and to appearance lifeless, and
 the air of her countenance so sad, so
 mourn-

mournfully composed, I was almost frantic. I snatched her to my breast, called loudly for help, and a thousand times repeated her dear name.

The servants were at too great a distance to hear my cries. I could not tear myself from her. Her face reclined on my bosom, while I watered it with my tears.

Yes, Madam, I own my unmanly weakness. — What savage heart could have been unmoved at such a scene?

At last, she recovered; she opened her languid eyes; she gazed wildly on me; for a moment, we were both silent—she uttered a deep sigh—"Weeping!" cried she; "my husband weeping! O then
 "let me die now, good Heaven, while
 "he condescends to pity his imprudent,
 "his unfortunate, but not guilty wife!"

"Not

“Not guilty!” cried I, starting from her. “O, I would freely shed as many drops of my heart’s blood, were it possible to believe you.”

“By all that’s good and sacred,” exclaimed she, clasping my knees, “I am innocent.”

I disengaged myself; she threw her arms on a chair that stood near her, and, laying her head on them, burst into a violent flood of tears.—I seated myself at some distance, and waited till the first transports of her grief a little subsided. She no longer wept aloud, but was almost suffocated with her sighs.—“Now, Jenny,” said I, no less deeply sighing, “listen to me with attention. I am not going to reproach you. Injured as I am, I am too much softened to resent that injury as I ought. My whole
“heart

" heart is melted into compassion. O
 " my fallen, my still-loved angel, why
 " —why—but 'tis past—and we must
 " separate for ever—I leave your own
 " heart to account for the motives of that
 " unhappy separation.—I would not
 " wish you to confess your guilt.—No,
 " let it be buried in eternal oblivion.—
 " May the world never know your
 " shame, nor that you have brought on
 " me!—Your friends are prepared for
 " your going into the country. Go then,
 " my unfortunate Jenny.—The house is
 " yours, and my fortune you may ever
 " command. Take from hence what
 " you think proper—and let us part
 " for ever—on my side without resent-
 " ment, with no sentiments but those of
 " tender compassion—and on yours, I
 " hope, with some sorrow, some pity, for
 " the misery you have caused the man
 " who so fondly loved you."

I could

I could not proceed: I pulled out my handkerchief, and even sobbed with grief.

She started up, and, wringing her hands, threw herself at my feet—"O!" cried she, "kill me, kill me at once; but do not drive me from you. My life, my soul, my husband, never, never will I leave you," clinging round me. You shall not force me from you; I have been imprudent. I have been an ungrateful, thoughtless, unhappy, giddy creature. But indeed, indeed—O what shall I say, what can I say, to convince you I am innocent?"

"Nothing, nothing, Jenny," interrupted I. "Read that," giving her Lady G—'s letter.—"Think where I found you, in what company.—Ah! can I doubt my senses? can I doubt such convincing proofs, and a thousand other corroborating

“borating circumstances?—No, no, unhappy girl, save yourself the trouble of a fruitless defence. Nothing can stagger my fixed resolution, to bid you an eternal adieu.—You are not the first wife that has erred—but perhaps the first that was ever so lamented by an injured husband.”

I rose while she read the letter, and walked up and down the room, that I might collect all my fortitude for a last farewell.

“O then, indeed,” cried she, weeping, when she had finished it, “my ruin is determined—my enemies are too powerful—but Heaven knows my innocence; and to that Heaven,” added she, raising her streaming eyes, “I apply for protection.”

She

She dried her eyes, and continued in
 a firmer voice—"I will go then, Sir,
 " since you are pleased to cast me off—
 " since you are leagued with my ene-
 " mies, to ruin a poor, defenceless, friend-
 " less creature—but remember, the
 " time may come, when you will too
 " late mourn my hapless fate, and wish
 " you had been less severe in punishing
 " my imaginary crime—malice and envy
 " will not always be suffered to tri-
 " umph; and, after my death, if not
 " during the few remaining wearisome
 " days of my earthly pilgrimage," con-
 tinued she, again bursting into tears,
 " my injured innocence will be mani-
 " fested.—Farewell then, Sir, since you
 " will drive me from you; and may all
 " the blessings of which you are going
 " to deprive me be doubly showered on
 " you!"

She

She turned from me with a mournful composure, and was going.—“One moment longer,” cried I with emotion—
 “O, Jenny, Jenny, how shall I part with you? thou darling of my heart! But, since we must, let us at least part like friends, like the fond lovers we once were, though now, alas! we must love no more.”

I extended my arms; she threw herself into them, uttered a deep sigh, and again fainted.

I laid her gently on a couch, gazed on her for some moments in silent agony; and I know not how far my weakness might have carried me, had I not fortunately cast my eyes on Lady G——’s letter, which lay on the ground.

At

At sight of it, my injured honour seemed to stare me in the face, and demand its right. I read it again. Resentment usurped the place of pity.—I durst not, however, trust myself with another glance.—I rung the bell. Her woman entered.—“Your Lady is ill,” said I; “did you not hear me call you? Quick, hasten to her assistance.”

I threw myself into a chair, and covered my face, lest the tempting Syren should again unman me. In that time, I recollected every circumstance that could strengthen my just resentment.

At last I heard her sweet, her plaintive voice: I could not stand it, I hurried out of the room.

As I had my handkerchief at my eyes, I hope the maid thought I retired to conceal

ceal my emotions.—I went to my room. I threw myself on my disconsolate bed. I heard her soon after come into her dressing-room; and, as there was but a thin partition between us, I also heard her say to her maid, “Make haste, pack up a few things, no matter how few—I shall not take you with me. Alas! my poor dear sister! and my poor Sir George! how much is he affected at her illness!—Order the carriage very early in the morning.”

After a considerable pause—“There, there, that will do; leave me, I shall undress myself.”

Somebody went out, and I heard the door shut. I looked through the key-hole, and saw the dear penitent on her knees, her arms on a chair, and her head reclined on them—My heart wept blood at the moving sight. “May Heaven
“hear

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“hear your prayers!” sigh’d I, “and forgive your errors as freely as I do from the bottom of my soul!”

I guess’d that she was resolved to pass the sleepless wretched night in the manner I saw her; and I threw myself on the ground, incapable of rest while she was deprived of it.—Oh! are we not both deprived of it for ever?

Next morning I rung for my servant —“Where is your Lady?” said I.

“Gone, Sir.”

“Why did you not call me?”

“She would not suffer me, Sir; she said, you were ill.”

“Ill enough,” returned I; “yet I wish you had called me. How unfortunate
“is

“ is it that I could not accompany her!
“ How did she go? in the coach, or cha-
“ riot?”

“ Neither, Sir; her Ladyship chose
“ a hired post-chaise, as the most expe-
“ ditious.”

“ And who attended her?”

“ She would take nobody, Sir; she
“ said, she was almost distracted at Mrs.
“ Manwaring's danger, and hardly knew
“ what she did. But her Ladyship bid
“ me tell your Honour, she hoped you
“ would follow her as soon as you could
“ possibly dispatch the business that
“ detains you at present.”

“ Fools!” cried I; “ why did not some
“ of you go with her? Never was there
“ such a set of blockheads. — You
“ might well imagine I should be angry.
—The

“ —The dear creature was so alarmed, I
“ do not wonder she was incapable of
“ giving proper orders—but I little
“ thought she would set off so very
“ early. I shall follow her myself to-
“ morrow, and hope to be expeditious
“ enough to overtake her.”

You see, my dear Madam, how art-
fully we have managed our separation.—
I set off myself as soon as this is finished.
I have dismissed all the servants but my
valet, a faithful fellow whom I can trust,
on pretence that you have hired others
for us in the country. None of them, as
I have conducted the affair, have the least
suspicion of our unhappy difference.—
My house is shut up.—I write this from
a private lodging—no matter where, nor
with what intent I am retired to it.

All the town believe we are both set
off for Rose-Hill. I saw your brother this
day.

day. I took my leave, and left him in the same belief; said, his sister was already gone—*gone* indeed!

She is with you by this time, I suppose. —Let me again beseech you to treat her kindly. Do not undeceive her worthy mother. Let her have the story all her own way. Let her think me cruel and unjust, rather than she should know her daughter's shame.

Write to me, I beg of you, immediately on the receipt of this. Direct your letters as usual. I every day send my servant to the post-office. I shall be here no longer than till I hear from you once more.

Farewell, my worthy, amiable friend. Pity me; and ah! pity the poor fugitive. —The house, and every thing in it, at Rose-Hill, is hers. Let her retire to it

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whenever she thinks proper. She may likewise draw on my agent; she has unlimited power.

Adieu once more—I know not how to have done; yet no man had ever so melancholy a subject. — Believe me

Yours, &c.

L E T.

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L E T T E R XIX.

To Sir GEORGE, from Mrs. MAN-
WARING.

WHAT language shall I make use of, to paint my agony, my distraction, on reading your fatal letter? Ah! my poor lost ruined Jenny! what is become of her? where is she?

O Sir, surely you are deceived. I could venture my soul upon her innocence—she could not—it is impossible she should—be the guilty creature you represent her.—I know her heart—she may be thoughtless, giddy, and imprudent—but surely, surely, she is virtuous!—How we doated on the dear creature!

—O, she was the pride, the joy, of her widow'd mother's heart!—What an angel was she, ere you took her to that cursed town!—But pardon me, Sir; I reproach myself for this seeming ingratitude to you, our generous benefactor, to whom we all owe so much.—But ah! the dear friendless creature! a fugitive indeed! what is become of her? You think she is with us. Alas! no—there is no such happiness reserved for us.—Heaven knows where the poor wanderer has concealed herself, where she has found refuge in her adversity—perhaps you are by this time able to inform us where we may find her.—For Heaven's sake, let us know if you do, that my husband may hasten to her. Yes, she shall find an azylum amidst her sympathizing sorrowing friends, though all the rest of the world despise and abandon her.

My brother too, I tremble at the consequence of his having seen your letter. I could not conceal it from my poor, now half-distracted mother. She was present when I received it. The effect it had on me put it out of my power to take the precaution that I could have wished, and you desired.—I fainted ere I had read it half through; and, when I recovered, found my mother in the same condition, my Harry almost frantic at the dreadful news—never was there such a scene of distress. My mother, when restored to sense and misery, calling on her beloved child—wringing her hands in unutterable anguish—her lost, her ruined child, her darling Jenny!—She has been ever since confined to her bed. The shock was too severe for age and an infirm constitution to support.—O! I shall lose her too!

In the height of our distress, we were surprized with a visit from my brother. —I was inexpressibly astonished to see him—to see him too, harrassed, pale, and fatigued. I uttered a loud scream at the sight of him—not doubting but he was come to bring us some still more fatal tidings.

“Thank Heaven!” cried he, pressing me in his arms, “my Fanny is, I hope, out of danger. I have rode night and day, from the moment I heard of your illness.—I do not take it well in Sir George and my sister, that they should attempt to conceal it from me. Did they imagine I had so very little affection for you, as to stay peaceably behind them, while they hurried away to attend you?—Where is Jenny? she may expect to be well chidden for her pretty caution.”

At

At her name, I burst into a violent fit of tears—

“Good Heaven!” exclaimed he, “what is the matter? Tell me, my dear Man-
“waring,” turning to my Harry, “what
“ails my sister?—But my sudden ap-
“pearance was too much for her weak
“spirits: I see she has been very ill. But
“take comfort, my Fanny; your brother
“is come to nurse you. I am an excel-
“lent nurse, I do assure you,” kindly
smiling on me, in hopes of giving a more
cheerful turn to my thoughts.—Ah! Sir,
we have ever been a family of love and
harmony!—“I am agreeably disappointed
“to find you so much better than I ex-
“pected,” resumed he; “that alarming
“gypsy, Lady Warwick’s maid, whom
“she dismissed before she left town, told
“me you were at the point of death,
“and that my sister had set off post to

“ fee you, without waiting for Sir
 “ George to accompany her, and in
 “ such distraction of mind, that she could
 “ give no intelligible orders about her
 “ journey; and that she set off without
 “ any servant to attend her—‘indeed,’
 “ added the woman, ‘she was almost out
 “ of her senses with grief—my master
 “ was very angry when he found she was
 “ gone alone, and followed her the
 “ next day.’—He had told me he was
 “ going, but not one word of your ill-
 “ ness; which the moment I heard, I
 “ mounted my horse—no leave asked—
 “ and here I am.—But, as it is a stolen
 “ march, and I find you, my dear, in so
 “ fair a way of recovery, I must march
 “ as fast back again.—But where’s my
 “ good mother and my saucy sister?”

Again I burst into tears.

“ It

"It will be impossible to conceal it from him," said my husband, in a low voice; "what shall I say to him?"

I was incapable of answering.—My poor Edward, inexpressibly alarmed at our mysterious behaviour, earnestly insisted on an explanation.—What could we say? what could we do? We were too much afflicted to have a proper presence of mind.—We were silent.

"O my God!" cried he, "I see it but too plain. I have lost my poor mother.—But where is Jenny? Your silence distracts me."

My sorrow was unsupportable. I sunk into my husband's arms, almost lifeless.

—My brother turned from us—he was hastening to my mother's apartment.

“O, stop him,” cried I; “rather tell him all.—The unexpected sight of him will deprive her of the little life she has left.”

My Harry desired me to retire, and prepare her for his visit.

While I was gone, urged by my brother's impatient importunities, and knowing it would be impossible any other way than by the truth to account for my sister's not being here, he at last shewed him your letter.

You, who know the impetuosity of his temper, may easily guess the effects that fatal letter produced—yet, when I appeared, he endeavoured to conceal his

his emotions. He desired me to conduct him to my mother.

Here was a new scene of misery, impossible to be described — she poured forth all her sorrow into the sympathizing bosom of a son, so dutiful, so tenderly beloved—but, while she mourned the ruin of her child, she conjured him to remember his obligations to you, and never to be wanting in gratitude where it was so justly due.—“My most ardent prayers,” said she, “shall ever be offered up for his happiness—whether my poor unfortunate girl is innocent or not, he is not to blame, since such dreadful appearances were against her —nay, he has acted by her with a generosity of which only he is capable.”

My brother endeavoured to change the subject—but I saw what painful struggles it cost him to restrain his passion.

I insisted on his taking some refreshment.—“O Fanny, Fanny,” cried he, shaking his head, “there is but one kind of food, for which for some time I shall have any appetite.—You may however give me a glass of wine; for “I own I am rather fatigued and faint.”

He sunk into a chair, pale as death, his spirits quite exhausted with the variety of his painful emotions.

As I could not prevail on him to eat any thing, and as it was late, I advised him to retire to his apartment.—He said, it was what he was just going to propose; then, embracing me affectionately,
he

he bid me adieu, and left me, my husband accompanying him.

They were shut up a considerable time together, but I could not prevail on my Harry to relate the subject of their conversation; yet he seemed very thoughtful and uneasy.

What was my grief and surprize next morning, when, tho' I rose very early after a sleepless night, I found him gone—set off for town again, without taking leave of any one of the family!—Gracious Heaven! I tremble at the consequence of his rage and resentment, so tanacious as I know he is of the honour of his family and of his own.

O Jenny, unfortunate girl! this is the effect of your imprudence, your giddy levity! How often have I remonstrated! —but

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—but she was born to overwhelm us all in misery and distress.

Pity us, dear Sir George. If you should meet, bear with perhaps some imprudent fallies of passion—compassionate his sufferings, and do not—O, do not—I cannot proceed.

For our sakes, have some regard for the safety of a rash, impetuous youth, who is not at present sufficiently master of his reason, to be answerable for his conduct—and O, let me beg too, if you should gain any tidings of the poor wandering fugitive, that you will deign to inform her sorrowing friends where they may find, and fly to her relief.

Pardon any parts of this letter that may appear wanting in respect to you. I am sure, they can only proceed from
the

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the present distraction of my mind, since no heart was ever more sensibly grateful for the many obligations it lies under to you than mine; and permit me to subscribe myself,

Your ever obliged servant.

L E T.

LETTER XX.

TO MRS. MANWARING.

MADAM,

THIS morning my almost distracted young Lady gave me the cover of a letter. "Write," said she, weeping, "an account of the dreadful scene, to which you were yesterday a witness—put that direction upon it—tell the unfortunate Mrs. Manwaring, her sister—her brother——O, my God!" added she, bursting into tears, "what will become of her! how will she support the fatal news!—I am unequal to the task of informing her.—Do it the best way you can—when I am
"more

“ more composed, I will endeavour to
 “ give her a more perfect account.”

She left me—and I, Madam, sit down to obey her commands—yes, I shall ever obey them to the utmost of my power, since I shall ever regard her as my mistress, tho’ reduced to a state more humble than that in which I had the happiness to serve her.

But forgive me, Madam; I ought not, by my own concerns, to trespass on your patience.—Alas! I feel a compassionate reluctance to enter on the melancholy subject with which I am going to afflict you—yet, ere I proceed to it, it will likewise be necessary to inform you, that Miss Irwin (with whom, during her father’s life, I lived, as maid, or rather companion, for we had been school-fellows) came some weeks ago to lodge at my house; I live at Kensington, Madam;
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 —and

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—and that, soon after, another Lady, her most intimate friend, an Officer's widow (and never was there a more afflicted one), came to live with her. They live extremely retired, tho' so near town—receive no visits—nor indeed ever stir out, unless to walk in the garden. My young Lady too has thought proper to change her name, and, in order to be still more private, they had settled every thing to retire farther into the country, and this was the day fixed for their departure. — But O, Madam, by what a fatal accident are they prevented!

Yesterday, about seven in the evening, I was standing at the parlour window, when I saw a young gentleman, his cloaths bloody, his face pale as death, whom two men, one in livery, the other I believe a soldier, were supporting between them, in order to carry him to the first house they came to, that he
might

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might receive proper assistance. Mine was the house nearest the Park, from whence they brought him.

I was hurrying to open the door, when I heard a loud shriek, and saw Mrs. Millbank, the widow-lady before mentioned, running, with frantic wildness in her air, along the passage, wringing her hands, and exclaiming, "My brother, my poor brother! O my God! my God!"

I had now opened the door. They bore him in.—Again she screamed, and, falling on her knees, with uplifted hands and eyes, "Thy punishment is just, O Heaven! may my death atone—"

She sunk down senseless on the floor.

The young Gentleman, who had fainted with loss of blood, was carried into the parlour.

parlour, and laid on a couch. The men left him, and hurried for a surgeon.—I, hardly knowing what I did, ran backwards and forwards, first to one, then to another, screaming for help.—My maid came.—I left her to assist Mrs. Milbank, while I endeavoured, as well as I could, to bind up the Gentleman's wounds.

In the mean time, Miss Irwin came out of the garden, where she had been walking—the parlour door was open—the condition in which she saw her friend for some time engrossed her whole attention. By the remedies they applied, she recovered. The first words she uttered were, “O my murdered brother! where, where have they carried him from me?”

“Your brother!” repeated Miss Irwin, with an accent of terror and astonishment, at the same time casting her eyes towards me, who was supporting his

his head on my lap, and chafing his temples, and endeavouring to restore his senses.

She started up, rushed into the room, and, clasping her hands, "O, West-bury! is it thus we meet? and have I then lost you for ever?—lost you, ere you had the consolation of knowing how dear you was to your unfortunate Louisa?"

She stood gazing on him in the most moving attitude, inexpressible woe on her countenance.—At last, uttering a deep sigh, she sunk down on her knees, and, throwing her arm round his neck, laid her cheek to his, and burst into a violent flood of tears—they came seasonably to her relief.

A little recovering, she raised her head—"Is he then dead?" cried she, looking

looking mournfully on his pale face.—

“ O, Westbury! and are you then insensible to the caresses of your Louisa —deaf to her sorrow?

The sound of a voice so dear to him, her tears, her embraces, restored him to life.—He opened his eyes, just as his unfortunate sister, leaning on the maid, pale, trembling, and unable to support herself, advanced towards him.

“ Where am I?” cried he, in a faint voice, looking wildly round him.—“ Am I awake? what do I see? is it possible,” fixing his eyes tenderly on her, “ this weeping angel should be my Louisa? —My sister too! — Good Heavens! how can all this be?”

“ Yes,” cried Mrs. Millbank, “ it is your wretched, guilty, ruined, distracted sister, who thus,” falling on her

her knees, "not daring to approach
 " you, sue for pardon.—Do you not
 " hate me? O, 'twas my guilty levity,
 " my wild imprudence, that has mur-
 " thered you—that has loaded my
 " friends with such insupportable afflic-
 " tion, and ruined myself!—Can you,
 " can you, forgive me?"

" Forgive you! my dear Jenny,"
 stretching out his hand; " come, my
 " poor, injured, unfortunate girl, and
 " let me spend the few moments I have
 " to live, in tenderly condoling your un-
 " happy fate, and in gratitude for the
 " amiable compassion of this generous—"

" Compassion!" interrupted Miss Ir-
 win. " O, Westbury! think you then
 " 'tis only compassion? How little do you
 " know my heart! a heart whose tender
 " feelings I cannot—nor do I longer
 " wish it—disguise from him who has
 " ever

“ever been master of it! Yes, Westbury,” continued she, throwing her arms round him, “your condition has forced a confession from me, which honour till now forbid me to make.”

“Gracious Heaven!” exclaimed he, pressing her to his breast, “how amply am I repaid!—She loves me then! I ask no more—now shall I die satisfied.”

The surgeon entered while he spoke. He desired the Ladies to retire. With some reluctance, Mr. Westbury quitted the hand of his Louisa, who, bursting into tears, took her afflicted friend by the arm, and they both hurried out of the room.

It is with the utmost sorrow, Madam, that I am obliged to inform you his wounds are pronounced extremely dangerous,

gerous, if not mortal. The King's surgeons have attended him; his poor servant has been continually hurrying backwards and forwards, that no possible help might be wanting.—He sat up with his master last night, as did the two poor afflicted Ladies. He had a very bad night, and is rather feverish; yet never did I see such manly fortitude and resignation. He has indeed all that true bravery so becoming his profession.

O, what an amiable youth is here destined to an untimely—yet, though I would not flatter you, I trust there are still some faint hopes. Do not therefore, Madam, yield to despair.

I must now take my leave, with assuring you that I am, though unknown, your sympathizing humble servant,

ANN SMITH.

LETTER XXI.

TO Mrs. MANWARING, from Lady
WARWICK.

NOW, Fanny, the measure of my
guilt, of my woes, is full.—O my
God! and yet I live! but 'tis just that,
for my punishment, I should be con-
demned to drag on a hated wretched life.

You have been wrote to, I find—you
know then the fatal news—Ah! see at
this moment he lies expiring.—See, see,
your dying brother; and think, ah!
think, what I, his murtherer, must feel!
—See his once blooming face, how pale!
his once sparkling eyes sunk in death!—
O distracting scene!

Let

Let me collect every moving circumstance, that I may lose my torture in my loss of reason.—No, that comparatively happy state is denied me; and I am endowed with strength, and suffered to enjoy my senses, only that I may the more severely feel, and the longer be obliged to bear, this unsupportable weight of anguish and affliction!—Was it not enough to lose my husband's heart?—to be dishonourably cast off, unjustly branded with shame and infamy? but that this last, this most terrible—ah! I cannot bear it—'tis too much.

Wretch! miserable wretch that I am! there is no end to my misery, my remorse!—I am not permitted to end my life and pain.—O, how severely am I punished for my follies!—What consolation is my innocence?—But am I innocent? what is one single virtue, when

set in competition with my faults? my too-late-lamented faults?

I have murdered you all.—Alas! my poor mother! can she survive this fatal stroke? O, my compassionate, my ever-kind sister, let me conjure you, ere she dies, to fall on your knees, as I now do while I write, and implore her, in my stead, to pardon her unhappy penitent daughter. Tell her too, I shall not long survive her—tell her, I am innocent. Read to her the account I am going to give you of that fatal adventure, the first cause of all this sorrow and irreparable mischief, that she may at least have one consolation at her death—the assurance that her poor, lost, ruined Jenny has not dishonoured either her cruel (cruel! ah! no, he is the best, the most generous of men!) husband or family.

You

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You have, I doubt not, heard from him the particulars of our unfortunate meeting after the play—O fatal amusement! wretched infatuated creature that I was, to be so wedded to folly!—O, that my miserable fate might be a warning to the thoughtless giddy flutterers of my sex, who are, as I once did, treading the flowery paths of vice and dissipation!—yes, pleasure becomes a vice, be it in its own nature never so harmless, when so immoderately pursued.

I think I told you that fiend Lady G— was to be of my party. She sent her carriage for me—she had her motives for this officious politeness.—I called for her, and we proceeded to the scene of my destruction.—Her brother was there; but, to my great joy, did not join us.—Two other Ladies, her particular friends as they are called, were all our company.

It was a crowded house; the Gentlemen had made room for the Ladies, so that none of them could get near us the whole evening.

Her friends pretended an engagement, and left the house at the end of the play.

I proposed going home at the same time, but could not prevail on Lady G——. The entertainment was, *The Spirit of Contradiction*; she had heard it much commended, and stay she positively would.

I could not leave her alone, and was therefore obliged to give up the point.

There was a violent bustle and crowd when the company begun to disperse. — “Let us stay,” said she, “till the hurry is over. I detest a mob.—My brother will see us to our carriage.”

She

She beckoned to him.—He did not come immediately—or perhaps could not get at us.—“Let us go,” said I, “without waiting for him. You see there is now scarce a soul in the house but ourselves—I am half frightened.”

“Pretty timorous soul!” cried she; “and for what, I wonder?—You would have more cause were we to attempt getting out without some male creature to attend us. I shall not attempt it, I do assure you.”

What could I do? At last, her brother joined us; but it was so long ere he did, that the company had quite left the house, and the very piazza leading from the playhouse.

He called loud for her carriage; upon which up came one of her servants, in a
F 4 pretended

pretended fright—"An accident has
 " happened, my Lady; in drawing up
 " to the playhouse, a coach drove against
 " your Ladyship's chariot with such vio-
 " lence, that one of the wheels was torn
 " off.—John, with the assistance of some
 " others, got it dragged to the next
 " coachmaker's, but could not get it re-
 " paired time enough to fetch your La-
 " dyship; so I thought it best to get two
 " chairs, which are here in waiting."

"O, they will do very well," cried
 she, and immediately stepped into one
 of them.

The Colonel put me into the other.
 "If I had not an indispensable engage-
 " ment," said he, "I would do myself
 " the honour to see you home.—If you
 " have the least apprehension, as you
 " have but one servant between you, I
 " think it will be the best way for yours
 " to

“ to follow my sister’s chair to her house,
 “ and then some of her servants can at-
 “ tend you to yours.”

I agreed to this, and ordered the man to go on; he took his leave—but hers had already got to a considerable distance.—I was a little alarmed at being left so far behind, and called out to the men to make haste. We were still under the piazzas; and, by their motion, I feared they were in liquor; nor was I deceived.—I every moment expected to be overturned—and, what was still worse, they began to swear at each other—no doubt, they were properly tutored! At last, they set me down just at the door of a tavern, and from words fell to blows.

Think how I must be terrified, alone, in such a situation!—I screamed for help; for the fellows every now and then jostled so violently against the chair, that I

every moment expected the glasses to be dashed in my face. I endeavoured, but in vain, to let them down; they were so fastened, that all my attempts were fruitless.

Thus shut up, I redoubled my screams. The tavern door was open. Some of the waiters ran out. I called to them.

Just as they released me from my uncomfortable prison, the Colonel appeared. "Good Heavens! Lady Warwick, is it you? how comes this? where is my sister?"

"O, for Heaven's sake," cried I, while he seized my trembling passive hand, "get me a little water, or I shall faint."

He supported me into the house, more dead than alive. They gave me some hartshorn,

hartshorn, which a little recovered me. I heard a noise of company in the lower rooms—I was ready to die with confusion, to find myself in such a place.

“ You had better retire for a few moments,” said the Colonel, “ till you are a little more composed. I will borrow a cloak and hat for you, if you are afraid to enter again into a chair, and will walk home with you.”

“ A chair! O Heavens!” exclaimed I, “ I can go very well on foot.—But let us go this instant; pray, let us be gone.”

“ Consider your dress, Madam; let me lead you into an apartment, till I procure what is necessary for your walk.”

At that moment a door opened, which terrified me, lest I should be seen in such a place; and indeed, hardly knowing what I did, I ran forward to avoid the company.

He again seized my hand; and, as we were at the bottom of a pair of stairs, began to ascend with me—when, ere we had advanced three steps, I saw Sir George coming down.

Not at that moment considering the consequence of such a meeting, I seized his dear hand in a transport of joy, “O, Sir! how fortunate! I have now indeed found a protector!”

This, as I shall answer at the last great day, is every circumstance of that unhappy affair, of which, alas! you too well know the fatal consequence. Yes, he

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he has no doubt informed you of our heart-rending separation—but ah! how little was it in his power to describe my anguish, my grief, my remorse!—for well do I know how little I am worthy of his affections—vain, inconsiderate, imprudent creature that I was!

How often have you, my kind, my amiable sister, warned me of my danger, and, with well-meant zeal, condemned my levity and indiscretion! O, had I followed your salutary advice!—but I was too happy, too exquisitely blessed!—it could not last.—What a husband I have lost!—O, torturing reflection!—lost by my own playful folly!—a man so very perfect, so gentle, so lovely, so engaging, and to me, his worthless wife, so fondly, so generously indulgent!

How will you be able to read this scrawl? My fast-falling tears blot the
paper.

FROM THE MODERN WIFE.

paper. Ah! my eyes shall never cease to flow, till death dries up their fountain of sorrow!

When cast off by this deluded, and (as he imagined himself) injured husband, where could I fly for protection? Determined from that moment never to admit a ray of comfort, I would not go to you, my too kind sympathizing friends, who would, I knew, take such pains to administer it.—No, I was resolved to bury myself in some joyless retirement; but, as I was likewise resolved never to accept of a farthing from Sir George, my plan was not easily settled.—I had indeed some jewels, the present of my worthy, generous godmother; them I could call my own, and I determined to dispose of them for my future support.—The sum I have received from them is not inconsiderable—ah! it will be sufficient for my few remaining miserable days!

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days! But, till I could a little settle my affairs, I came to a resolution of going for a while to my noble, amiable friend Louisa, who, by my importunity, I had prevailed upon, when she left me, to promise she would not remove to so great a distance as to deny me the pleasure of sometimes paying her a private visit.

A servant—a worthy sensible woman—who had once lived with her, had a house at Kensington; where by my persuasions she consented to take up her abode, at least till she could find a place more convenient, and farther in the country. To this dear creature then I went, sinking under a weight of woe, which I poured out on her sympathizing bosom. She listened—and, ah! how sincerely did she compassionate my sufferings!—my too justly merited sufferings!—It was then the generous, noble-minded girl first confessed her passion for my brother—O that dear
loved

loved name!—my tears, my anguish, redouble!

Again I take up my pen—perhaps this is the last time I shall ever write to you, my dear sister. Let me then endeavour to recollect every thing I have to say to you, ere I bid you an eternal adieu—I know not exactly what fate intends for me; but too well I know, misery is my portion.—Pressing me to her breast, “Let us go,” said she; “let us retire from this wretched world; and, sisters in affliction, let us be no less so in friendship and affection—I swear,” continued she, falling on her knees, “while you are wretched, to share your fate. If happiness should again dawn upon you, then will I rejoice at that happiness, and leave you to the possession of it—but till then I am inseparably united to you. What I have, I owe to your bounty; and here I restore it to
“ you

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“ you—only suffer me to attend you—
“ nay, I will—yes, I swear by Heaven,
“ nothing shall force me to abandon
“ you.”

I clasped her in my arms. “ Generous
“ creature!” cried I; yes, we will unite
“ our little fortunes; our hearts are al-
“ ready united, nor will we ever sepa-
“ rate. Let us find out some obscure
“ retreat; and there let me indulge my
“ unconquerable sorrow, my endless re-
“ morse!”

Things were soon prepared for our journey. We had found out an obscure retreat, at the house of a gardener—when, O dreadful, dreadful scene!—my brother—my beloved brother—I cannot proceed.

He is not in a condition to give any account of this fatal duel; nor dare I ask, nor even question his servant. I tremble,
lest

lest my distracting doubts should be confirmed—yet that surely, that would end my wretched life.

My friend, more inured to misfortunes, and who has by that means acquired more fortitude, without my knowledge sent privately to know what was become of Sir George; but, when her messenger returned, and brought her word that his house was shut up, and that it was reported he was gone abroad, she could not conceal her emotion from me.—I insisted on knowing the cause of this new alarm, to quiet my painful apprehensions; for my terrified imagination had represented it as something, if possible, still more fatal.—Good Heavens! if my husband—but she is at last gone to question the servant who was present.—I am in agonies—O sister, sister, what will become of me?

Thank

Thank Heaven! O, thank Heaven! it was not him.—I have not time for particulars.—My brother calls—“ Louisa “ —my dear Jenny—are you there?” —O heart, obdurate heart, why dost thou not break, and end my tortures? O, he’s gone—he’s gone—madness and distraction!

LOUISA in Continuation.

Do not be too much alarmed, my dear Mrs. Manwaring—it was only a fainting fit, from which, thank Heaven! he is now recovered—O, how tender is his behaviour to the poor afflicted Lady Warwick! how inexpressibly tender to me, his equally-afflicted Louisa!—He took a hand of each just now, as we stood weeping by his bed-side; and, raising first the one, then the other, to his pale lips

lips—"Why will you not be comforted?"
 looking fondly on me; "and you, my
 " Jenny, why these incessant tears? for
 " pity's sake, do not thus wound me by
 " your unavailing sorrow! You see how
 " resigned I am. I feel only for you, my
 " kind sympathizing friends. We must
 " die some time or other—what matters
 " it whether to-day or to-morrow, I have
 " only to suppose I have lived out my
 " threescore years and ten. We can
 " enjoy only the present moment. What
 " is past, is lost to us—what is to come,
 " cannot be enjoyed till it arrives.—
 " I know not," continued he with a
 faint smile, "how you will relish this
 " philosophy; but, if you do not relish
 " my precepts, try at least to copy my
 " example. — Providence never af-
 " flicts us with any calamity, but what
 " is accompanied with some alleviating
 " circumstances, that we may be able
 " to

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“ to support it.—A few weeks ago, I
“ dragged on an insipid being, pining
“ with hopeless unrequited love. O, how
“ much preferable is death, with an
“ assurance that that love is no longer
“ hopeless! To die in the presence of
“ her on whom my soul so fondly
“ doats! to be attended by her with
“ such sweet assiduity! O!” added he,
feebly pressing my hand to his breast,
while his eyes glistened with sensibility,
“ I ask no more; my Louisa will receive
“ my parting breath; she will suffer me
“ to recline my fainting head on her
“ gentle bosom; I shall expire in her
“ clasping arms.”

I could not contain myself. My sobs
almost choaked me—I sunk down on the
bed, and on his dear bosom endeavoured
to stifle my sorrowful emotions.

Pity

Pity me, Madam ; and do not too severely condemn me for this, perhaps too free, acknowledgment of my weakness. But I am certain my dear Mrs. Manwaring too well knows the satisfaction of so ingenuous a confession, to blame her afflicted friend.

LET-

THE MODERN WIFE. 119

L E T T E R XXII.

From the Colonel to Lady G—.

I AM safely landed at Calais, and now sit down to give you some account of my affair with Westbury; about which the town has, I doubt not, by this time, reported half a hundred lies.

He is a noble fellow, upon my soul, I honour him for his spirit and bravery, and am sorry it was my fate to deprive the world of so promising a youth; but I feel the less remorse, because he absolutely, by his rash impetuosity, rushed upon his fate, in spite of my endeavours to save him.

Ah!

Ah! sister, what have your sex to answer for!—Is there any mischief of which they are not some way or other the cause?—Here am I, a murderer and exile, driven from my native country, by the seducing destructive charms of a coy, perverse woman.—Had she been kind indeed—yet perhaps it is better as it is, since I have one crime the less to answer for—tho', if to covet my neighbour's wife be a sin—Lord help the wicked!—then half the town's as guilty as your humble servant.

That I did covet her with my whole soul, is most certain; and how could I help myself?—but I did not stop there—true—I attempted to seduce her.—Why, if you Ladies will so invitingly hang out a flag of truce, and so kindly encourage the enemy's approach, what would you have us do?—No man ever
made

THE MODERN WIFE. 121

made a dishonourable attempt, but when encouraged to it by an improper behaviour.

Lady Warwick is virtuous—I have found her so:—but, by her modish conduct, the odds were ten to one against her—any man would have betted on the contrary side.

While fashionable wives take such pains to display their charms, to please every man but their husbands; while they so continually throw themselves in our way, and are to be found every where but at home; what can we imagine, from such forward advances, but that they expect as forward advances in return?

You encouraged me to hope every thing from her levity and dissipated turn.
— This turn, in any other woman,
VOL. II. G would

would have rendered your encouragement needless—that very turn was sufficient—but Sir George was no contemptible rival. I thought it impossible she should not love the (as he is allowed to be) finest fellow in England; though I knew she too ambitiously aspired to the character of a fine Lady, not to use all her endeavours to conceal it.

I made the attempt, assisted too by a woman's wit—I was unsuccessful, and your last deep-laid plot proved abortive.—How the Devil Sir George came to pop upon us so unseasonably, is to me unaccountable; in a house too where such sober fellows as him so seldom appear!—But why should I lay much stress on his demure gravity? Are we not all hypocrites some way or other? And he may, for all that, be as great a wag at his heart as the best of us.

Well,

Well, peace be to the subject. And now a few words more of poor Westbury.—I was on guard at Kensington, and had spent an agreeable day at Miss C——’s. Returning to town in the evening without attendants, who should I meet but the young Captain, parading up and down not far from the Park-gate next the palace.—I accosted him with great politeness.

He took hold of my arm. “I have
“ been waiting for you some time, Co-
“ lonel. I want to have a little private
“ conversation with you.”

He led me to a retired spot, near the wall.—We were both silent.—He then stop’d, and, laying his hand on his sword, with a spirited air, “You have
“ injured me, Sir ; and I demand satis-
“ faction.”

"I injure you, Westbury! What do you mean?"

"I will not condescend to explain myself," replied he disdainfully; "let your own heart answer the question."

He drew.—"Defend yourself," added he; "for, by Heaven, one of our deaths is determined."

"Hear me one word," cried I; "for your own sake, hear me.—By all that's good and sacred, your sister is virtuous."

"Who shall dare to doubt it?" interrupted he passionately; "but you are not the less a villain for tempting that virtue."

E

"A villain!"

"A villain!" cried I resentfully.

"Yes, a villain! I again repeat it.
"Revenge yourself for the indignity."

"Really, Westbury, I never had
"less stomach for fighting than at this
"moment; but, if you will force me—"

"No more, Sir; I am not to be trifled
"with."

"Well, then," cried I, "your blood
"be upon your own head."

We fought—'tis not the first affair
of this nature I have been engaged in.
—I had the advantage of him in cool-
ness of temper and experience.—I did
not make any other use of those advan-
tages, but to defend myself —till the
brave impetuous youth pressed me so

warmly, that I could no longer study his safety, without endangering my own. He was no match for me in any thing but courage. My skill was superior.

He was dangerously wounded; yet would he not yield, tho' I offered the most honourable conditions.

At last, making a desperate pass at me, my sword went quite through his body.

He uttered a deep sigh, and fell to the ground, to appearance lifeless.—I threw away my instrument of destruction; and, falling by his side, wrung his hand in agony of grief—"O Westbury, if possible, forgive me ere you die."

He made an attempt to speak, but could not.—At last, feebly pressing my hand,—“I am the aggressor,” said he, in
a faint

a faint voice; "you are a generous enemy. Call my servant, he is not far off, that he may be witness."

He could not proceed.—I called the fellow; who, when he saw his master in that condition, was almost frantic.

"Robert," resumed the dying youth, "remember, if your testimony is required, the Colonel only fought in his own defence.—Go, Sir," looking at me; "provide for your safety."

The last words were hardly articulate. He fainted with loss of blood: I staid by him whilst his servant ran for assistance, which he procured from Kensington.

I saw them, as I made my retreat, convey him towards the town.—Tho' he had honourably acquitted me, I yet

thought it most prudent to abscond till I know his fate; tho' I have no great reason, from the circumstances of the affair, to be apprehensive of any bad consequences—to myself, I mean.

But, alas! poor Westbury! fatal has been the consequence to him!

Write to me instantly, Lady G—. I would fain indulge some faint hopes that he may recover; tho' I think, from the condition in which I left him, it is impossible—let me however know his fate—I am on the rack of impatience.

What says the town on the occasion? what says poor Lady Warwick?—How I pity her!—Yet has she not some little reason to reproach herself, as the cause of all this mischief?—I trust, it will at least cure her of coquetry.

Take

Take warning, sister; — I take the liberty of a brother, to tell you, I am not quite satisfied with your conduct. While blinded by my passion, I was not at leisure to reflect on the dishonourable part I suffered you to act; but I now blush both for you and myself.

How does your Lord? Give me leave gently to remind you, he is your husband. Adieu, my pretty confident; you was so of my vices, it is but just you should likewise be so of my reformation.

L E T T E R XXIII.

From Sir GEORGE, to Mrs. MANWARING.

HOW sincerely do I condole with you, my dear Mrs. Manwaring, on this last fatal accident!—I have now a double cause for vengeance—nor shall the villain escape my just revenge.—Ah! why did your too-impetuous noble brother interfere? He has encroached on my prerogative.—Would to Heaven, I had fallen in his stead! How little do I now value my wretched life!—No, with my Jenny, I lost every joy this world could give.—You think her virtuous—O, had she been virtuous, she had been an angel.—May you never, like me, be fatally convinced of the contrary!

The

The moment I heard the news of my poor young friend, I was hastening to attend him; but, just as I was stepping into my chariot, a servant I had dispatched to collect some more perfect intelligence of the affair returned, and brought me the mournful tidings of his death, and that the Colonel was gone off.

Vengeance now engrossed my whole thoughts—"Yes," cried I, "though I
 " perish in the attempt, my honour and
 " his much-lamented death shall be re-
 " venged. My presence here can now
 " be of no service to my poor, unfortu-
 " nate Westbury. Let me then follow
 " the dictates of my just resentment,
 " and instantly pursue the villain who
 " has loaded me with such calamities!"

I immediately ordered my baggage to be got ready, and in less than two hours set off for Dover. I had a quick passage, and am now writing to you from Calais; and, what is still more fortunate, have already gained some intelligence of my enemy, who left this place only last night, and pursued the road to Paris.

That shall likewise be my rout. I only wait till my carriage is got ready; and write to you in such haste, that I hardly know what I say. It is at the gate. Adieu, my dear Madam; be assured my sorrow for our common loss is inexpressible, and that I am

Your most affectionate friend.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXIV.

From Mrs. MANWARING, to Lady
WARWICK.

THIS morning my poor afflicted husband set off for London.—O, why am I not permitted to attend my poor dying brother? and must I never—never see him more? My heart is almost broke. I cannot leave my mother; she is dangerously ill. Could any thing on earth but that keep me from him?—We shall lose her too—I do not reproach you, my poor, afflicted, penitent sister.—'Tis the will of Heaven; and we must submit.

I read her your mournful letter. She was drowned in tears; yet, at that part which

which so evidently, at least to us, cleared your innocence, a momentary gleam of joy brightened her countenance.—
 “Thank Heaven!” said she, “my sweet
 “suffering girl is virtuous! O, how con-
 “soling is that assurance!—She kneels
 “for my pardon. Ah! can my darling
 “Jenny ever kneel in vain to her fond
 “mother?—No, tell her, that, from the
 “bottom of my heart, I pity and forgive
 “her. Tell her, I now send her a dy-
 “ing parent’s blessing, and shall again
 “more solemnly repeat it with my ex-
 “piring breath.”

Take comfort then, my sister—Ah! how much do we all stand in need of it! But where is it to be found? who will administer it to us?—Alas! in this world, I can no longer hope for it.—No, the cup of happiness, which had but just touched my lips, is dashed from me for ever;

ever; and I shall now go mourning to my grave.

All my fond Harry's tender care, all his gentle eloquence, cannot soothe my grief; and, now he has left me, I shall sit down, and uninterruptedly indulge my sorrows. But why should I join mine to the almost insupportable load with which you are already oppressed?

Farewell; I am so harrassed, so ill, that I can hardly hold my pen. I need not bid you write, though indeed I shudder at the very thoughts of your next letter.—Dreadful suspense! But ah! how much more dreadful the certainty I fear!

L E T.

L E T T E R XXV.

From Mr. MANWARING, to his Lady.

ONLY two lines, my beloved Fanny; but those lines will be inexpressibly welcome, since I have the pleasure to inform you our dear brother is surprizingly better than I expected to find him.

I am but just arrived. Poor Lady Warwick! how greatly is she altered! I found her seated by his bed-side—her hands clasped—her eyes anxiously fixed on him.—At every motion he made, her countenance expressed a variety of emotions; she seemed suspended between hope and fear.—I thought she had been informed of my arrival. She must have expected

expected me. But I found they had not told her I was come, for she uttered a little scream at the sight of me, and, starting up, seized my hand.—“ My mother!—my sister!” cried she; and, without being able to proceed, sunk again into a chair, and burst into tears.

I tenderly embraced the lovely mourner, and endeavoured to calm her agitations.—I then went to our brother. He is all himself, not the least alarmed or dejected at his situation. He welcomed me with his usual kindness; and, with earnest tenderness, enquired for Mrs. Westbury and his Fanny. “ How, my dear Harry, do they support—” “ yet do not tell me,” added he; “ mine are nothing, but I cannot bear the affliction of my friends.”

“ That affliction,” returned I, “ will be greatly alleviated, when I inform them
“ you

“ you are so much better than I expected.”

“ Better!” cried he, with vivacity,
 “ I am well; my Louisa is my physician; she is the arbitress of my fate;
 “ she commands me to live, and to live
 “ *for her!*—Delightful hope! it animates me with new life. Her presence,
 “ her sweet assiduity—how was it possible I should—”

I smiled at the lively impetuosity with which he expressed himself.—I have had a private conference with his surgeons, who hope in a few days to pronounce him out of danger. His wounds were extremely bad; and the fever, from which he is not yet perfectly free, was still more alarming; but to-day they find so many favourable symptoms, that they can almost answer for his recovery.

Heart

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Heart-reviving subject!—I meant only a few lines, as I told my love when I sat down, for I am not a little fatigued with my hasty journey—but I know not how to leave off. They urge me to take some refreshment. I must yield to their kind importunities, and bid my Fanny a reluctant adieu.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXVI.

Lady G—— to the Colonel.

A Very brotherly kind of a letter, it must be owned, perfectly free and easy!

So, you don't approve of my conduct—and how will you help yourself, honest friend?—What tyrants would you men be, did we not now and then pluck up a spirit, assert our dignity, our right, and claim an equal empire o'er the world! But for this same spirit, the want of which few Ladies now-a-days, whatever they might in the soft silly age of our grandmothers, have reason to complain, how hard would be the condition of our sex!

Attend

Attend—I am going to spout—

“ In every state of life, the slave of

“ man :

“ In all the dear delightful days of

“ youth,

“ A rigid father dictates to our will,

“ And deals our pleasures with a

“ scanty hand :

“ To his, th’ imperious husband’s

“ reign succeeds;

“ Proud with opinion of superior

“ wisdom,

“ He thinks domestic business and de-

“ votion

“ All we are capable of—and shuts

“ us up

“ Like cloister’d ideots, from the

“ world’s acquaintance,

“ And all the joys of freedom.”

My

My stars! to what *Terra Incognita* did the poet's imagination take its flight, when he penned this extraordinary description of matrimony!—You may indeed be proud with opinion of superior wisdom. We give you leave—while you in return give us leave continually to outwit you.

But then domestic business and devotion!—I could die with laughing at the bare idea. Yes, we are, to be sure, very domestic, very devout, it must be owned. And for freedom—bolts and bars, you would have thought—but Venus laughed—and you poor jealous souls have at last laid aside those fruitless precautions, and restored us to our rightful liberty, which you see we are too generous to refuse.—No, no, things are at present upon a very tolerable footing;

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ing; it is no longer esteemed a woman's greatest fame, to have been unknown—our light is no longer hid under a bushel—we have heard, “Let your light shine before men;” and we take care to obey the precept. All your fame is now derived from your wives. Our husbands are known at our gates for—I won't say whats.

And so you are astonished how Sir George came to pop upon you so unseasonably at C—'s! O, my poor stupid brother!—why, did you really think I set my brains to work, only to forward your insignificant amours? No, no, honest friend; I had a plot within a plot. While you thought I was forwarding your scheme, I was all the time making a tool of you, to serve my own—Why, durst you really presume to imagine I would turn procuress for you, impudent fellow as you are?—No, I brought you
together

together indeed in a very critical juncture ; but I have too much virtue—aye, virtue, I say, in spite of that ironical smile—to leave my friends exposed. No, no, I took care to have a protector at hand for her.

I own, indeed, things have not turned out to my wish or expectation more than yours.—Sir George was not to be deceived.—Truth prevailed ; and, though appearances were so much against her, she some how or other made a shift to convince him of her innocence.

Surely, brother, you made some stupid blunder or other.—How else could he, after the pains I had taken to rouse his jealousy, have so readily given credit to her?—Well, never again will I admit a male creature into any of my schemes, you are such blundering Marplots ! I could cry with vexation to think
the

the conceited minx should thus triumph over all my fruitless devices.

If you ask me why I so cordially hate her—why—why—I won't tell you, brother. If you will take a woman's reason—why, I hate her—*because* I hate her.

I thought a separation, at least, would have been the consequence of my plot—instead of which, I have reason to believe, they are more firmly united than ever—gone billing together in the country, soft silly souls as they are! There will she forget all the modish lessons I took such unwearied pains to teach her.

Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! that I should thus suffer her to slip through my fingers, ere I had in the least effected my purpose!—and that you—O, never for the future dare to boast of your conquest!—But cry ye mercy—I forget your reformation.

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H

—Well,

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—Well, this same duel has had a mighty pretty effect on you.—I'll warrant, you have already penned your last dying speech and confession; shewing how a well-disposed young man was brought to that untimely end by women, wine, and gaming; and begging all hopeful youths to take warning by your tragical fate, &c.

Lock it up carefully; the time may come, but you do not swing this bout—Have a care of your reformation—the man's alive and well; so you may lay aside your penitentials, and come amongst us again. But don't come with that ruefully-solemn face with which you penned your last sage epistle. Come like yourself, gay, spirited, and debonnaire—as you wish for a favourable reception from your already more than half angry

CAROLINE.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXVII.

The Colonel to Lady G—.

SIR George is in Paris. I have this moment received a note from him. You may guess the consequence of our meeting, when I tell you—but I have not time. Ten thousand thanks for the joyful news of Westbury's recovery.—What a load has it taken off my spirits! I can now meet my death—if death awaits me—with more fortitude, since I have not his to answer for.

Adieu—perhaps for ever.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

From Mr. to Mrs. MANWARING.

HOW much am I alarmed at the letter you inclose from Sir George!—Good Heaven! are we never to be at peace? never to taste, one moment, unmixed satisfaction? This has almost destroyed the joy I was beginning to indulge on your brother's recovery.—He is now perfectly out of danger—your sister and his Louisa were almost wild with transport, when the surgeons gave them the delightful assurance, they had no more to fear on his account; that they would take their leave, as their assistance was no longer necessary.

But

But the first transport of their joy is subsided ; and they are fallen into a still, if possible, more melancholy dejection—but I attribute it to their spirits being so much exhausted with watching and fatigue.—They use their utmost endeavour to conceal this dejection from our brother, who is all extacy when his Louisa is present, but still afflicted on his sister's account ; yet he flatters himself her sufferings will not be of much longer duration.

“ I will see Sir George myself,” said he to me this morning, “ as soon as I am permitted to leave my chamber. Surely he will listen to reason ; now he has had time to reflect, I make no doubt but I shall be able to convince him of her innocence. I would not send for him here, because I want to prepare him, that he may give my

H 3

“ sister

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“ sifter a kind reception when I restore
 “ her to him.—I wonder indeed he has
 “ never had the generosity, the compas-
 “ sion, to visit me during my illness ;
 “ tho’ I am glad he did not, till I have
 “ leisure, if possible, to vindicate her
 “ injured fame. She has powerful ene-
 “ mies; and they, no doubt, take pains
 “ to steel his heart, not only against his
 “ unfortunate wife, but against her
 “ friends, lest they should be able to
 “ undeceive him—that, I trust, will be
 “ reserved for her happy brother.”

Alas! little does he know in what
 a dangerous situation that misguided,
 rash, ill-fated husband now is—nor must
 he—the anxiety it would cost him might
 be of fatal consequence to his yet but
 imperfectly re-established health.

How am I distressed for our worthy
 mother! I fear indeed we must not flat-

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ter ourselves with the hopes of her recovery ; yet surely, now her beloved son is thus restored to her, I should think it would produce some favourable change. —I commend your caution, my dearest prudent Fanny, in not shewing her Sir George's letter. Continue that prudence, my love. Read her none of this, but what mentions your brother's amendment ; and let me again assure you both, I do not flatter you ; he will absolutely in a few days be able to leave his apartment. He talks of accompanying me when I return. He is impatient to see you. He mentioned this design to his sister ; “and, to insure myself a welcome,” said he, pressing her hand, “I will present to them a long-lost daughter and sister. — Will not my Louisa too,” added he, looking tenderly on her, “be of the joyful party ? Surely you will not leave your friend,

“ refuse to receive the grateful acknowledgements of mine.”

They both sigh’d—Lady Warwick and her I mean—and looked with meaning on each other—but were silent.

Adieu, my adoreable Fanny; I have nothing material to add, but my earnest wishes for Mrs. Westbury’s recovery; and that I remain unalterably

Your fond, affectionate

HARRY.

LET

L E T T E R XXIX.

Mr. LESLEY to Sir GEORGE.

THIS letter cannot possibly, by the Colonel's short note to his sister, reach you time enough to prevent the threatened mischief.—Was it kind in you, Sir George, to treat a friend with so much reserve? Have I deserved this treatment?

But, alas! whom am I reproaching?—to whom do I write?—Perhaps my valuable friend is no more—or, if he lives, what may not have been the consequence of his fatal rashness? Yet I must write, were it but to ease my own tortured heart.

H. 5

How.

How astonished was I to hear, from that Devil Lady G—, that you was at Paris! how alarmed, when she shewed me her brother's letter, and with anguish and deep remorse made a confession of her guilt!

Almost distracted at your danger, she threw off the mask, and discovered herself in her true colours. She was no longer capable of disguise. Her love for you got the better of every other consideration. She made even *me* the confident of her guilty passion—raved like a mad woman at your danger—discovered all the artifices she had made use of, to work you to her purpose—her diabolical plot, to give you a suspicion of your wife's virtue—her artful insinuations, to excite your causeless jealousy.

I have

I have since heard from Mr. Manwaring, with whom I met by accident at a coffee-house, the dreadful consequence of her cursed malice. She has solemnly assured me, your injured wife is irreproachably virtuous; nay, she does not yet know that you doubt it—nor shall any one but your firm friends know your unhappy infatuation.

If, by any fortunate means, your meeting with the Colonel has been prevented—yet dare I flatter myself with an impossibility?—this letter will, I hope, restore you to reason. But if you have met—if you are the conqueror—let the assurance of your lovely Jenny's virtue administer some consolation, and soften the misery of your banishment.—Or, if some compassionate angel, as I before said, has interposed, and saved you from

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guilt and ruin, hasten your return—hasten to comfort the injured mourner, ere sorrow for the loss of a husband puts a period to her at present wretched life.

I write this letter at a venture, tho' I dare not hope you will ever receive it. I inclose it to a friend, with order to return it to me unopened, if neither the Colonel nor you are to be found; but he is to deliver it to either of you.

If you, Sir George, are the survivor, write instantly, and I will attend you in any part of the world.

If it is you, Colonel, do not fail to let me know every particular about my friend, immediately on the receipt of this.—Either of you may trust me.

That

That fiend Lady G—— is alone the
cause of all this mischief.

Be punctual—be speedy—I am dying
with anxiety and suspense. Adieu.

LET

L E T T E R XXX.

Mr. to Mrs. MANWARING.

FRESH cause of sorrow! my beloved Fanny.—How does it pain your affectionate Harry to afflict you, as he must by the melancholy news! but we cannot long conceal it from your knowledge.

Do not, however, be too much alarmed. All your friends are well, though none of them are so happy as you could wish. Your dear brother is perfectly recovered, and, in a very few days, will accompany your impatient husband to ***. Ah! how impatient to fold you to his fond constant heart!—But, alas! your

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your sister and her charming friend—
how I admire the generous yet distressing
conduct of that noble-minded girl!
—but let me give you the particulars.

Your dear brother, all love and raptures, had settled every thing for our journey to * * * *. They had given no absolute promise; yet, as they made no objections, we had not the least doubt but they were to accompany us. Ned and I could talk of nothing else but our joyful meeting; your transports, and Mrs. Westbury's recovery, when blessed with the presence of her darling Jenny.

They listened, sighed, and I could observe a tear stealing gently down your sister's pale cheek; but we attributed all this to her melancholy, for which, though her brother lives, she has still but too much cause.

This

This morning was fixed on for our departure. I do not lodge in the same house, there was not room for me; but I attended, ready equipped for my journey, early in the morning.

Entering the parlour, I found only Mrs. Smith—"Are my friends ready?" asked I.

"Ah! Sir, the Ladies are already gone."

"Gone!—what do you mean? where are they gone?"

"That, Sir, is more than I can inform you. All I know is, they took leave of me about five in the morning, gave me two letters to deliver to Captain Westbury, and then set off in a post chaise and four."

I was

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I was almost stupified with surprize—but, recovering a little, I took the letters, and hurried to your brother's apartment.

His servant was just dressing him. “Have you seen my sister?” cried he; “I’ll lay my life, the lazy girls will not be ready this hour; but I shall take the liberty for once to disturb their rest.”

“Let us breakfast first,” said I; “and by that time they will perhaps be ready to attend us.”

I wished to gain time, to prepare him for the shock I knew their departure would give him.

He complied with my request. Breakfast was brought in.—You may believe, I had

I had but little appetite.—He was in high spirits—but how were they damp't, when, by degrees, and with all the tender caution I could make use of, I disclosed to him the melancholy tidings of their flight! In spite of all these precautions, he was almost frantic for the loss of his adored Louisa; but I will not pain my Fanny's gentle heart, by attempting to describe his emotions.

I leave you to imagine his grief, and proceed to transcribe for you my sister's and her friend's letters. I could not prevail on him to part with the originals. One of them he wears next his heart; from whence he swears it shall never be removed, till he finds again the fair inflexible writer.

My

My sister's is as follows :

“ Forgive me, my tenderly-loved brother, that I, a wretch sinking under
“ a load of anguish, should fly from
“ you, lest my sorrows, which no time
“ can conquer, should infect you, and
“ damp your returning joy and tranquillity. I have for some time done
“ violence to myself, by endeavouring
“ to conceal my heart-consuming grief,
“ but the restraint was unsupportable ;
“ and I fly to retirement, that I may
“ be permitted uninterruptedly to enjoy
“ it.—I had, ere I saw you, sworn to
“ bury myself in some joyless retirement. I had sworn never more to
“ admit a ray of comfort to visit my
“ wretched bosom, that seat of misery
“ and remorse.—How then could I accompany you to my too-kind indulgent

"gent friends?—Ah! no, I am unfit
 "for society. I renounce the world,
 "since, by my own folly, I have lost
 "all that could endear it to me. I leave
 "it with all the satisfaction my situation
 "can admit, since Heaven has heard my
 "incessant prayers, and spared your
 "precious life.—You, my Edward, are
 "going to gladden, by your wish'd-for
 "presence, your fond expecting friends.
 "O, comfort them, my brother, comfort
 "our afflicted mother; do not yield to
 "dejection for the loss of your Louisa
 "—would' I could have prevailed on
 "her to stay!—exert that fortitude, of
 "which, on other trials, you have given
 "such uncommon proofs—let my be-
 "loved mother at least have the joy of
 "seeing her son return in peace. Let
 "the generous sacrifice my friend has
 "made to prudence, and for your real
 "happiness, animate you to follow so
 "bright an example. Only the condi-
 "tion.

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“ tion in which she saw you—but she
“ will herself better explain her gene-
“ rous motives for a conduct which you
“ perhaps may deem cruel—ah! how
“ unjustly!—Alas! it planteth daggers
“ in both our hearts to give a moment’s
“ pain to your’s! — But there is no
“ remedy; and we must all endeavour
“ to submit to our fate.—Adieu, my in-
“ expressibly dear Edward; I shall write
“ once more to my beloved Fanny, and
“ then farewell to every earthly connec-
“ tion—farewell to all the deceitful va-
“ nities under the sun—and welcome,
“ consuming melancholy, which I trust
“ ere long will put a period to my
“ wretched life.—and farewell, my dear,
“ dear brother; do not forget

“ Your unfortunate sister.”

To

To Capt. WESTBURY, from LOUISA.

“ I cannot leave you, my amiable
“ friend, without bidding you a tender,
“ a last adieu. Would to Heaven! I
“ might still, consistent with my ideas of
“ honour and gratitude, have been per-
“ mitted to enjoy the happiness of your
“ dear society! But, though the condi-
“ tion in which I lately beheld you
“ threw me off my guard, and forced
“ from me a confession of my weakness;
“ yet are not my circumstances altered,
“ nor would our union be less impru-
“ dent than when I last sought my se-
“ curity in flight. Ah! I even then
“ knew how unable I should be to resist
“ your tender eloquence; and now,
“ when my unfortunate passion has taken
“ still deeper root in my heart, what
“ would

“ would become of me?—No, my ami-
 “ able lover; think not I will suffer you
 “ to involve yourself in difficulties for
 “ my worthless sake; think not I will
 “ be a bar to your fortune, that fortune
 “ which you so justly merit, and which
 “ I know it is in your power to make
 “ yourself master of whenever you think
 “ proper. Your interest is much dearer
 “ to me than my own. A union with
 “ me would be the highest indiscretion.
 “ Moderate is my ambition—yet could I
 “ —O, no—I should for ever reproach
 “ myself, were I to see the man I so
 “ tenderly esteemed, straightened in his
 “ circumstances, his happier prospects
 “ frustrated, by allying himself to my
 “ indigence. Believe me, my generous
 “ Westbury, your commission is but a
 “ scanty provision for a wife and family.
 “ You have been accustomed to afflu-
 “ ence; you are qualified to make a dis-
 “ tinguished figure in life; you must
 “ then

“ then—ah! think what struggles it has
 “ cost me, ere I could prevail on myself
 “ to make a request so painful—but,
 “ indeed, you must forget your unhappy
 “ Louisa, who flies from you in hopes
 “ her absence may render it an easier
 “ task.—There is another far more wor-
 “ thy object, who, if a tender innocent
 “ passion can give her any claim, has a
 “ juster, or rather more prudent, one to
 “ your heart. Recollect her various
 “ charms; you cannot be at a loss to
 “ guess who I mean. She is too artless
 “ to conceal her partiality even from
 “ you. I therefore think it no breach
 “ of confidence to tell you how dear you
 “ are to her heart. Ah! will not a
 “ creature so every way agreeable and
 “ engaging make you ample amends for
 “ my love? for the loss of a poor, friend-
 “ less, destitute orphan, who has no-
 “ thing but misery to her portion, and
 “ who has nothing to subsist on but the
 “ charitable

“charitable bounty of strangers?—But
 “the amiable Juliet has, independent of
 “her personal charms, rank, family,
 “and fortune to recommend her, and
 “as many virtues as ever adorned our
 “sex. O, listen then to my friendly disin-
 “terested counsel.—Why should you
 “indulge a fruitless passion, which I
 “cannot, must not encourage. I have
 “solemnly sworn, never to be yours till
 “I am mistress of a fortune worthy of
 “your acceptance; and that, alas! can
 “never be.—Forget me then, I repeat
 “it in spite of my murmuring refractory
 “heart, if you have any true regard
 “for me. Let me at least see you happy;
 “and be assured, that will be the only
 “means to promote mine.—For your
 “Louisa’s sake, for the sake of your af-
 “fectionate friends, who so ardently wish
 “your prosperity, listen to my advice;
 “pity the now almost hopeless passion
 “you have inspired in the innocent bo-
 VOL. II. I “som

“som of my amiable young friend.—
 “How often has she, while fondly dwell-
 “ling on your praise, excited mine!
 “she is mistress of her fortune, nor
 “would her worthy mother oppose her
 “felicity.—O, that some friendly an-
 “gel would assist me with its eloquence
 “to prevail on you!—What do you
 “hope for?—Be assured, I am lost to
 “you for ever.—Attempt not, for fruit-
 “less would be the attempt, to discover
 “the place of my retreat.—I have taken
 “many precautions to conceal it.—Call
 “then your prudence, your fortitude, to
 “your aid; and submit with resignation
 “to a last adieu, which my weak refrac-
 “tory heart hesitates to pronounce. The
 “painful struggle is over—and now
 “once more farewell, thou most amia-
 “ble, thou most engaging of men.

“Farewell for ever.”

L E T-

L E T T E R XXX.

To Mr. LESLEY, from Sir GEORGE.

FROM what a dream of misery do I awake! O Jenny, my lovely-injured Jenny, are you then virtuous?—But dare I hope for pardon?—Can she, Lesley, ought she to forgive my inhuman treatment?—Yet, when she reflects on the artifice that was practised to deceive me—the fatal appearances that were against her—I would fondly flatter myself, she will be prevailed on to be reconciled to her penitent husband.

Fly to her, Lesley; instantly fly, on the receipt of this, to the mourning angel. Bid her be comforted. Tell her, I am hastening to implore her pardon—

coming to restore to her that heart of which she is so worthy.

Plead for me. I depend much on your friendship.—You accuse me of reserve.—Pardon me, Charles; no secret of my heart has ever been concealed from you, which it did not wound my honour to reveal.—The infidelity of a wife is what no man in his senses would expose to the dearest friend he has on earth.—I at least would not—and, when I fancied I had received that shameful injury, my first care—even preferable to revenge—was to conceal it from the world.—But the latter was also to have its turn, though executed with prudent caution.

To effect it, I followed the Colonel. We met.—The first transports of my rage had had leisure to abate, yet was I not the less determined to wipe off the

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stain he had cast on my honour, by his blood. But I was quite cool, and master of my temper. He was no less so.

“ You comprehended the meaning of
“ my note, Colonel, I make no doubt;
“ and are, I presume, ready to give me
“ satisfaction—’tis sufficient that we un-
“ derstand each other, there needs no
“ farther explanation.”

“ You are mistaken, Sir George,”
returned he calmly; “ for, ere I give
“ you what you call satisfaction, you
“ must convince me I have injured you
“ —’tis your happiness, not my own
“ safety, that makes me insist on your com-
“ pliance with this demand.—You dare
“ not doubt my courage, since there is
“ so recent an instance of it. I am sorry
“ to have been the cause of so much un-
“ easiness in your family; but your wife
“ is virtuous, nor did I ever attempt
“ that

“ that virtue farther than custom and
 “ fashionable gallantry permits.”

“ No more,” cried I, warmly ; “ I
 “ am not to be talked out of my just
 “ vengeance.”

“ Hear me, Sir George ; I am not so
 “ very a hero, as to fight merely for
 “ the pleasure of fighting. I have
 “ some little regard for life ; and should
 “ be loth, if I can any way avoid
 “ it, to deprive another of that blessing.
 “ Answer me one question.—Suppose I
 “ could give you incontestable proofs of
 “ your wife’s innocence as well as my
 “ own, would you still persist in your
 “ purpose ? If you are determined to
 “ amuse yourself with a tilting-bout,
 “ with or without reason, why come on,
 “ I will not baulk your fancy ; for I
 “ believe I am a tolerable match for you.
 “ But, if you would rather wish to be
 “ restored

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“ restored to your lost happiness, by
“ having a virtuous injured wife restored
“ with unsullied purity to your arms,
“ then read that letter, which a few
“ days ago I received from Lady G— ;
“ I almost blush to call her sister; and
“ I fancy you will no longer have reason
“ to entertain injurious suspicions—you
“ will no longer indulge an error so fatal
“ to your peace.”

I took the letter.—“ My revenge,”
cried I, “ will keep cool. Ah! would
“ to Heaven! you could make good what
“ you promise! there would be no longer
“ cause to indulge it.”

“ Read,” cried he; “ you know her
“ hand. I scorn all artifice to my own sex,
“ whatever arts I may practise on the
“ other; but the plot that caused all
“ this mischief was, as you will find,
“ the contrivance of Lady G— .”

I was reading the letter as he spoke—I knew her hand, I knew her stile—could I any longer doubt my cursed infatuation, or the injustice I had done my injured wife?

I stood fixed in astonishment at my credulity, which had made me such a dupe to a malicious envious woman—a woman too, with whose character I was so well acquainted.

“Are you satisfied?” cried the Colonel. “Shall we be friends or foes? ’Tis equal to me. Here’s my hand, if you wish a reconciliation; if not, here’s my sword.”

I took his offered hand—“I make a very silly figure,” said I; “I blush at my folly; you have restored me to reason. I now see the cursed affair in
“ its

" its true light. How could I be so blind!
 " How could I stop my ears to the voice
 " of truth, and that from the lips of an
 " angel!—Sweet pleader! had I but
 " listened to you!—how was I infatuat-
 " ed!—I would not give the least atten-
 " tion to her story, hurried on by resent-
 " ment, and convinced by such fatal
 " appearances. But you, Sir, have
 " happily undeceived me; 'twas the
 " kind office of a friend, and as such I
 " shall ever regard you; and I hope the
 " mischief it has caused, and the danger
 " it has exposed you to, will henceforth
 " make you a little less liberal of what
 " you call *modish* gallantry to your
 " neighbours wives."

" Upon my word," cried he, "I now
 " look upon such conduct as highly dis-
 " honourable, as well as inhuman; and
 " I engage that you shall be the last
 " husband that shall ever have cause to
 " I 5 " complain

“ complain of my conduct towards his
 “ wife. It must be owned, I did flirt with
 “ Lady Warwick ; nay, to be frank, I
 “ must own, I had a passion for her ; but
 “ may I perish if ever I received the
 “ least encouragement from her ! She was
 “ gay and thoughtless indeed, and some-
 “ times, to appearance, a little impru-
 “ dent ; but I do not believe there is a
 “ woman in England who is more vir-
 “ tuous, or has in essential points a more
 “ just regard for her honour. She was,
 “ like the rest of her dissipated sex, car-
 “ ried away by the prevalent stream of
 “ fashion, and an eager pursuit of plea-
 “ sure. But she is young, inexpe-
 “ rienced, has a great flow of spirits,
 “ was courted, caressed, admired ; can
 “ you then wonder at her conduct ? This
 “ affair, fatal as the consequence might
 “ have been, will, I doubt not, be of
 “ infinite advantage to her ; and your
 “ reconciliation will cement your union

“ on

“ on a more solid and parmanent foun-
 “ dation than without this separation
 “ you could ever have hoped for.—Be
 “ assured, I long to give you joy on
 “ being restored to each other’s affec-
 “ tions; and am heartily sorry that it
 “ was my fate so long to disunite two
 “ hearts so worthy of each other.—I am
 “ a wild fellow, or rather *have been*
 “ so; nay, have still a thousand faults;
 “ but I may perhaps in time prove my-
 “ self not altogether undeserving your
 “ esteem, and the honour of being
 “ ranked amongst the number of your
 “ friends.”

We adjourned to my hotel, dined to-
 gether, and parted with the utmost cor-
 diality. Upon my word, he is a sensible
 fellow. My prejudice against him made
 me till now blind to his merit.—But
 what a Devil is his sister!

I received your obliging letter this morning, and my happiness is still more confirmed by the account you send me of her confession and remorse.—I am preparing for England with all expedition.—The Colonel accompanies me in my voyage.—O, Charles, my most ardent wish is, to be soon united to my Jenny, that dear injured angel. Make it your business to see her, and gain me a kind reception. She has a tender gentle heart. O, how I long to clasp her in my arms! transporting thought! the bare idea fills me with extacy!

Adieu, my generous Lesley. I shall soon in person make my acknowledgements for your kind anxiety for the welfare of

Your obliged, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXXII.

To Captain WESTBURY, from
Sir GEORGE.

NOT know where she is gone! impossible to discover the place of her retreat! O, Westbury, I am almost distracted. To what purpose am I returned to England, since I have lost the only object who could render that or any other place supportable?—But hasten to town, and let us again renew the search. By Heavens, I will not rest till I find her, tho' I should search the remotest corner of the world.—How can you, a lover too, sit down contented with a loss, for which, if you love like me, nothing on earth can make you amends?

amends?—But she has sworn never to be yours till she is mistress of a fortune worthy your acceptance; be it my care to remove that obstacle. Let us only find the fugitives, and all will yet be well.

May I expect you, Westbury?—Your mother's illness is indeed a too just cause for your delay. But, come or not, my search begins to-morrow.—Lesley accompanies me.—Which way shall we steer our course?—O, a lucky thought has just struck me.—You tell me, Mrs. Manwaring had a letter a few weeks ago from her retreat. The post mark is worth a million—examine it—be quick—send me instantly the cover of that letter.

Westbury, be speedy, I conjure you; consider my impatience. I wonder this
thought

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thought of mine could escape you.
But I make allowance for your present
affliction. My best wishes attend you
all. Adieu.

LET-

L E T T E R XXXIII.

From Sir GEORGE to Captain
WESTBURY.

THE cover burnt! mislaid! not to be found!—was ever any thing on earth half so provoking?—My patience is quite exhausted; and I am almost distracted with grief and disappointment. But I have still an expedient in reserve.—That Mrs. Smith you mention, perhaps she is in the secret, which I would give any sum to extract from her—it is hardly possible but her young Lady should have some curiosity to know if you follow her advice—to know how you support her absence, &c.—Who so likely to be trusted as this woman, to send her
those

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those accounts? a faithful creature, and one too who has so little connection with your family?

Here is a new twig of hope, to save me from sinking—and to her I will this very day pay a visit. Entreaties, promises, threats, bribes, nothing shall be omitted, that may induce her to open her heart.

A carriage.—Lesley, I suppose.—He comes seasonably, I will get him to accompany me in my expedition.—Ah! who have we here?

In Continuation.

I give you joy, my dear Westbury—
I have such news for you!—You tell me,
in your last, our worthy mother is better.

—Hasten

—Hasten to me then the instant you receive this. — Your presence is absolutely necessary.—I have a person to introduce to you, the sooner the better, whose approbation is indispensably necessary to your happiness.

But, to make myself clearer, let me give you the particulars of this morning's adventures.—I heard, as I told you, a carriage stop; and was surprized on the entrance of an old gentleman, a grave-looking man, an utter stranger to me.—I received him with the utmost civility.

“ Why, this is as it should be!” cried he, as I led him to a chair.—“ I despaired
 “ of the least politeness from the fine
 “ powdered fops of this court-end-of-
 “ the-town, as you call it. If the treat-
 “ ment I just now received from Lady
 “ G—’s, as I ran the gauntlet thro’ half
 “ a hundred of the grinning puppies,
 “ be

" be court breeding, commend me to
" us good, plain, honest citizens."

" You have been at Lady G——'s,
" then, Sir?"

" Aye, aye, I have been there, sure
" enough; and might almost as well
" have saved myself the trouble, for
" any good I got by it; a conceited
" court-bred minx as she is, with a par-
" cel of gaudy butterflies buzzing about
" her!—it was above an hour ere she
" could find time, forsooth, to answer
" one plain easy question.—' Does Lou-
" isa Irwin still live with you, Madam?'
" —One would have thought there was
" no great trouble in resolving it.—
" Yet there did I wait and wait till she
" had dispatched her impertinents—and
" then—' Really, Sir, I know nothing
" of the person you enquire for; 'tis
" now

" now several months since she left me.
 " —O, now I recollect, the last person
 " she lived with was Lady Warwick.
 " I believe she is not in town; but I
 " think they told me Sir George was
 " at his house, where you will most
 " likely gain intelligence of your
 " niece—you are, I presume, her un-
 " cle.' She rung the bell with a care-
 " less air.—A servant entered—' Give
 " this honest man a direction to Sir
 " George Warwick's.' —Honest man!
 " quotha! yes, I believe I am an ho-
 " nest man, or I should not have prof-
 " pered as I have done. I am not
 " ashamed of the title, tho' she seemed
 " to mean it as a slight. Why, truly,
 " I believe it is rather out of fashion at
 " this end of the town—but she did not
 " perhaps know that the *honest man*, as
 " she called him, was likewise a *rich*
 " *man*, and has by his industry acquired
 " wealth enough to buy her, and all
 " her

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“ her generation—but that’s neither
“ here nor there. And so, Sir George, my
“ niece lived with your Lady—my poor
“ dear Louisa, that I used so ill—but
“ I was deceived,—her enemy is now no
“ more. Alas! my poor penitent child!”
continued he, wiping his eyes, “ be her
“ faults forgot! and, as a father, I must
“ lament her death. But where, Sir, is
“ my Louisa, my now-adopted daughter?
“ Restore her to me, Sir, that she
“ may be a comfort to me in my old age,
“ now I have lost her who was once so
“ dear to me.”

“ I am inexpressibly sorry, Sir, that it
“ is not in my power to tell you to what
“ part of the world she is retired. She
“ staid not long with my wife, who had
“ joyfully taken her under her protection,
“ though they are to this hour the most
“ affectionate friends.—My brother-in-
“ law conceived an honourable passion
“ for

“ for her. She was not insensible—but
 “ she was too grateful, too generous, to
 “ encourage his addresses—indeed, it
 “ would have been an imprudent match
 “ for both.—She retired then, in hopes
 “ absence might enable him to forget
 “ her.—But it has not had the desired
 “ effect. He loves her with redoubled
 “ tenderness, charmed with her conduct
 “ and numberless virtues.”

“ Ah! she was indeed ever a vir-
 “ tuous, prudent girl,” cried he; “ but
 “ had he no fortune? or was he dissuaded
 “ by his friends?”

“ No, Sir; his friends highly ap-
 “ proved his choice.—As to your other
 “ question, he has no fortune, but merit
 “ and a commission.—I do not know a
 “ more accomplished worthy young
 “ man.”

He

He shook his head — “A commission!
 “ I am sorry there is a red coat in the
 “ case. I am no friend to these swag-
 “ gering blades, whom we pay to de-
 “ stroy our enemies, but who spare nei-
 “ ther friends nor foes; who make such
 “ terrible havock amongst our wives and
 “ daughters. But he’s a worthy young
 “ man, you say; and the girl likes him—
 “ well, well, we will see what can be
 “ done. If he’s like *you*, Sir George, I
 “ don’t know but I may be prevailed on;
 “ though, between you and I, thirty
 “ thousand pounds, and so fine a wo-
 “ man, is rather more than ought to
 “ come to the share of any red-coated
 “ cockaded fellow in England. It is not
 “ indeed the colour of the coat; for
 “ you, Sir George, whom I look upon
 “ to be a very worthy honest man, have
 “ a red one on at this moment; but ’tis
 “ his profession that I object to.”

“ Whatever

" Whatever groundless objections
 " you may have to his profession, yet I
 " am convinced, when you know him,
 " you can have none to him, except his
 " want of fortune."

" Fortune! Sir George—I'd have you
 " to know, I am no more mercenary
 " than my neighbours; and if, as I
 " think you said, he would have taken
 " her without one, why, he shall not be
 " outdone in generosity; for I can now
 " give her enough for both. She shall
 " take him upon the same terms—that
 " is, if I find he answers the character
 " you give me of him—I won't throw
 " her away neither."

" I am convinced, Sir, you could not
 " bestow her better than on my worthy
 " brother, who has so fervent a passion
 " for

“ for her, and would be so studious to
“ promote her happiness.”

“ Well, well, we shall see; but where
“ is she to be found?”

I told him of my intended visit to Mrs. Smith, and with what intent.—He remembered her perfectly well; “ and, if
“ she knows any thing of my niece,” said he, “ I am sure, when she is informed who it is that is in search of
“ her, she has too much regard for her
“ interest to conceal it.”

“ Then, Sir,” cried I, “ do me the
“ favour to dine with me; and, in the
“ afternoon, I will accompany you to her
“ house.”

“ Why now, that’s frank and kind,” said he; “ I hate ceremony: but I love
“ order and regularity; there’s nothing

“ to be done without it; so I must send
 “ to my housekeeper, as I always do
 “ when I dine abroad. Mine is an or-
 “ derly family, I am exact in every
 “ thing; no business of any kind can be
 “ done without it.”

Do you know, Westbury, I am quite
 delighted with this future uncle of yours?
 I like his humour, and even his oddities,
 of which he seems to have an uncom-
 mon share.

But for the pleasing prospect of your
 happiness, which in some measure abates
 the force of my painful anxieties, I
 should be almost driven to despair, by
 these provoking delays and disappoint-
 ments.—Mrs. Smith was from home.—
 We waited a considerable time, and at
 last were forced to return to town with-
 out seeing her.

O patience,

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O patience, patience, do not quite forsake me ! We repeat our visit to-morrow morning ! but I shall dispatch this, to hasten you to town. Adieu !

K 2

LET.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

Sir GEORGE to Captain WESTBURY.

NEVER let it be said a woman cannot keep a secret. O this inflexible confident!—Yet, thank Heaven! our affairs are in a far more prosperous way than when I last wrote. But all my persuasions, my entreaties, promises, offers, were ineffectual. She had sworn not to discover the place of their retreat; she durst not, nor would she ever have owned even that she was intrusted with the knowledge of it, had not her young Lady's interest forced her to that confession. “No creature on earth,” added she, addressing herself to Mr. Irwin,

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“ can more sincerely rejoice to hear of
“ your kind intentions in favour of your
“ worthy niece, nor would be more so-
“ licitous to forward it ; but I dare not
“ violate my oath, even for her good.
“ All I can do for you is, to get a letter
“ conveyed to her, if you chuse to
“ write ; and then she may discover her-
“ self or not, as she thinks proper ;
“ though I make no doubt but she joy-
“ fully will, when you, Sir, for whom
“ she has ever expressed the most duti-
“ ful affection, desire it.—If then, Sir,
“ you chuse to write, it shall be my care
“ to dispatch your letter with all expe-
“ dition—I can do no more ; my con-
“ science will not permit me to perjure
“ myself.”

Though my heart murmured at those provoking scruples, yet I could not help esteeming the faithful creature, and desisted from my importunities. "There is no managing these women," cried Mr. Irwin; "they are continually making some rash vow or other.—But a promise is a sacred thing; I never broke one in my life, nor will I urge another to a crime, which all honest men detest; so get me pen, ink, and paper, and I will write, since we can do no better."

He sat down—"Let me beg of you, Sir, not to mention me or Westbury in your letter. I have particular reasons—I will explain them to you when we have more leisure. Tell her, it was
" through

“ through Mrs. Smith you was enabled
“ to send it. Let her suppose it was
“ through her alone you gained any in-
“ telligence.”

“ Enough, enough, Sir George; I
“ am instructed—but say no more. You
“ confuse me.”

He shew'd me what he had written—
a very kind letter; a promise of settling
on her at his death his whole fortune;
and to give her, when she thought fit to
dispose of herself, if he approves of her
choice, thirty thousand pounds: he beg-
ged her to come immediately to town; or,
if more agreeable to her, let him know,
and he would fetch her; but, above all,
to be speedy in her answer, because he
was inexpressibly impatient to see her,

and to obtain her pardon for his unjust and cruel treatment.

Surely this must produce the desired effect.—O, Westbury, surely, surely, it cannot now be long ere I embrace my Jenny; ere the dear injured angel is restored to my arms!

The important letter is now on its way—I die with impatience. Mr. Irwin is almost continually with me. I make it my business to do you justice. I need do no more, to compel his esteem. Come, however, and, by your presence, confirm his favourite sentiments.

I have but one great point in view, which entirely engrosses all my attention. I know nothing of what passes in the world; I will see no body but Lesley and
your

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your intended uncle. I can attend to nothing, think of nothing, talk of nothing, but our approaching happiness! exquisite, unspeakable happiness! — to have my charmer restored to me!

How is Mrs. Westbury, and my amiable worthy Mrs. Manwaring? how are all my valued friends? They must, they will be well, when I again present to them the most lovely, the dearest of her sex. O, how dear to us all!

Adieu! My best wishes to every one of your family.

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XXXV.

From Captain WESTBURY to Mr.
MANWARING.

I Arrived at Sir George's about two hours ago, my dear Manwaring; and sit down to give you an account of my reception from Mr. Irwin, whom I found with him.—He has not yet received the anxiously-expected important answer to his letter.—O! what shall I do with my tormenting impatience?

Sir George embraced me, and, turning to Mr. Irwin, presented me to him. “This,” said he, “is my friend Westbury,
“bury,

“ bury, of whom you have heard so
“ much.”

I bow'd with infinite respect.—He returned a slight nod.—“I am not disappointed,” cried he humourously——
“ just such a spark as I expected!—black
“ eyes—white teeth—and a cockade!
“ —what woman could secure her heart
“ from such attractions?—and so you are
“ in love with my niece, Captain; and
“ have the conscience to expect I should
“ bestow her and thirty thousand pounds
“ upon thy sweet person, I'll warrant ye!”
winking at Sir George.

“ That I love your niece, Sir, I glory
“ to avow; but that I either expect or
“ desire a fortune so much above my
“ desert, is a presumption I shall never
“ indulge. If she would have conde-

“ scended to have been mine without
 “ one, I should have been happy, and
 “ it should have been my unwearied
 “ study to promote hers; but, now her
 “ circumstances are so much altered, I
 “ dare no longer indulge the most distant
 “ hope, and must for the first time
 “ endeavour to conquer my unfortunate
 “ passion.”

“ Why these,” cried he, “ really are
 “ noble sentiments, Sir George. I could
 “ not have expected them from the
 “ mouth of such a gay young powder’d
 “ spark.—He has almost removed my
 “ prejudice; and, if he will promise to
 “ lay aside his gaudy trappings, and quit
 “ a profession for which I have so unconquerable an aversion, why then I
 “ don’t know but I may let him have
 “ the girl.”

“ My

“ My profession, Sir,” cried I, colouring with some degree of resentment,
 “ is an honourable one; and I glory in
 “ it: I cannot tamely hear it insulted.
 “ How can a subject more laudably distinguish himself, than by devoting himself to the service of his King and
 “ country?”

“ Aye, aye, fine talking!” cried Mr. Irwin, smiling on Sir George; “ but
 “ when shall we see any of you heroes
 “ serving your King and country without being well paid for it?”

“ We need not blush to receive the
 “ reward of our services, Sir; it is very
 “ unreasonable in you to grudge paying
 “ us for securing to you your right and
 “ property. What would become of
 “ you,

“ scended to have been mine without
 “ one, I should have been happy, and
 “ it should have been my unwearied
 “ study to promote hers; but, now her
 “ circumstances are so much altered, I
 “ dare no longer indulge the most dis-
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“ serving your King and country without being well paid for it?”

“ We need not blush to receive the
“ reward of our services, Sir; it is very
“ unreasonable in you to grudge paying
“ us for securing to you your right and
“ property. What would become of
“ you,

“ you, but for our necessary defence ?
“ Could you without us enjoy the fruits
“ of your industry ?”

“ And what,” interrupted he, “ is the
“ mighty difference between being spoil-
“ ed by our enemies, from whom you
“ pretend to defend us, and being bur-
“ thened with a standing army, who
“ eat up the fruits of our industry, and,
“ like idle drones, live on the labour of
“ the industrious bee ?”

“ I see,” cried I a little contemp-
tuously, “ we shall never agree in
“ our sentiments ; and, though my dear-
“ est happiness lies at stake, I scorn to
“ dissemble mine—or meanly to flatter
“ myself into your good opinion.”

Sir

Sir George, fearing I had expressed myself too freely, winked at me, and, taking my hand, "Are you mad, West-bury? do you consider—"

"Let the lad alone," cried Mr. Irwin, seizing my other hand, "he wants none of your tuition. I adore him for his spirit. What I have said, was on purpose to try him. Had he been so servile a puppy as to cringe and fawn to me, I should have despised him—but I see he is a noble brave fellow, and he shall be my nephew. The girl has taste. They are worthy of each other. So cheer up man, Louisa Irwin and thirty thousand pounds are yours; I give you my promise, and I never broke a promise in my life."

"O, Sir,"

“ O, Sir,” pressing his hand between mine, “ now indeed you overcome me ;
 “ this unmerited generosity—but be assured, I will study to deserve it.”

“ Enough,” interrupted he ; “ no more professions. I never make any.
 “ I am a plain honest man, my word’s
 “ my bond, and sincerity my idol.”

A summons.

In Continuation.

O, Harry ! the dear transporting letter is arrived. She is found—the treasure of my heart is found. I am half wild with extacy.—Yet poor Sir George !—we are never to experience happiness without

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without alloy.—His Jenny, our lovely sister, is ill—very ill, I fear.—I transcribe part of my adorable's letter :

“ Be assured, Sir, I would instantly fly
“ to you, with the most grateful joy for
“ your unmerited goodness, but for the
“ illness of my inestimable friend, that
“ friend to whom, as I before said, I am
“ under such infinite obligations: nor are
“ they all that bind me to her; our hearts
“ are united in bonds of tender friend-
“ ship; nor, while she is unhappy, can
“ I indulge my satisfaction, even in your
“ returning goodness, and my unexpect-
“ ed reverse of fortune. Our destinies
“ are inseparably united. I have sworn
“ never to abandon, never to forsake
“ her; and can I then leave her in this
“ distressed condition? can I leave the
“ lovely

“ lovely afflicted, sinking under a weight
 “ of sorrow, which only my presence
 “ can alleviate?—No, while she lives,
 “ I must attend her, tho’ duty and af-
 “ fection urge me to fly to my generous
 “ uncle, for whose kindness, believe
 “ me, my heart overflows with the
 “ warmest gratitude.—But, if you, dear
 “ Sir, will condescend to visit us in our
 “ humble retreat, you will confer much
 “ happiness on us both. Fain would she
 “ prevail on me to leave her.—Heaven
 “ forbid!—I need not ask your pardon,
 “ my dear Sir, for my conduct, since I
 “ know and have experienced so many
 “ proofs of your humanity.—I flatter
 “ myself then that you will honour us
 “ with your wish’d-for presence. I im-
 “ patiently expect you. Pray oblige
 “ me, if your health will permit you
 “ without

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“ without danger or inconveniency to
“ undertake the journey.—I send you
“ a direction, &c.”

Mr. Irwin was greatly softened.—
“ ’Tis a noble generous girl,” cried he;
“ but who is this friend?”

“ Ah! Sir, that friend is my unhappy
“ sister; but I trust she will not long be
“ unhappy.”

“ Oho!—your sister! no wonder she
“ is such a favourite!”

Sir George had thrown himself into a
chair—his head leaning on his hand—
lost in thought.—But he now started up
—“ Let us go this moment,” cried he;
“ let me fly to the dear suffering angel.
“ Ah! Jenny, Jenny,” continued he,
striking

striking his breast, "shall I then be deprived of you again, and that for ever? O, my flattering deceitful hopes, which I so fondly cherished! and are they come to this?"

His impatience—I may say *our* impatience—was so great, that Mr. Irwin consented to set off the moment the coach could be got ready.

I hear it—Adieu! I fly, on the wings of love, to my Louisa; and I trust too the presence of Sir George will have a happy effect on our dear Jenny. I hear his voice, loudly calling for me. Adieu.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

From the same to the same.

NOW, Harry, I have indeed a transporting subject for my pen.—We reached the rural habitation of our angels about nine in the evening. The carriage stopped. The sight of it could create no violent surprize, as my charmer expected a visit from her uncle.

She ran to the door, O, how inexpressibly lovely!—ran, I say, with open arms to receive him—But judge of her astonishment, when I, her happy, her transported Westbury, rushed into those dear extended arms, and pressed her to my beating heart.

She

She uttered a scream, and fainted on my breast. I bore her into a parlour, placed her on a couch, and, by my fond, my tender caresses, soon restored her senses.

She raised her fine eyes—"Good
 "Heavens! is it possible? and am I
 "then so blest'd? O, my kind generous
 "uncle," throwing her snowy arms
 round his neck—"and do you then ap-
 "prove?—but could you do otherwise?"
 looking tenderly on me.

"I do," said he, embracing her,
 most heartily approve; "and what," ad-
 ded he smiling, "would it signify whe-
 "ther I did or not, since I see you are
 "determined to throw yourself away on
 "this pretty fellow, who has entangled
 "your heart in his shoulder-knot?"

"Throw

“ Throw myself away, Sir!—but I
“ know my dear humorous uncle.”

“ Aye, aye, you know how easily you
“ can make a fool of him; but you shall
“ not have the pleasure of acting con-
“ trary to my inclination—for here,” con-
tinued he, taking my hand, “ I do from
“ my whole soul freely bestow you on
“ him; and so make the best of a bad
“ bargain.”

I threw myself at her feet in an ex-
tacy, while I pressed her dear unreluc-
tant snowy hand to my lips.

Sir George, who was not a very pa-
tient witness to this scene, as you may
believe, rejoiced however at my happi-
ness—his own was too doubtfully im-
perfect

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perfect to suffer him to feel all the pleasure he would otherwise have done.

He approached my charmer; and, with a trembling faltering accent, hardly articulate, asked for her friend.—“ My “ Jenny,” said he, “ my injured Jenny, “ where is she? why am I not permitted “ to fold her in my arms? to comfort “ the poor afflicted—”

He turned from us, to conceal his emotions, which quite unmanned him.

My Louisa — now disengaging herself from her lover—“ Pardon me, “ Sir George; I hardly saw you. “ Good Heavens! are you then deceived? and will you do justice to my “ suffering injured friend?—What transports!—Have a little patience,” continued

tinued she, "I will endeavour to prepare
" her."

"Tell me first," cried Sir George, seizing her hand, "are there any hopes?
" her life!—her precious life!—O, ease
" my tortured heart!"

"Your presence, Sir, may do much.
" Endeavour to compose yourself."

She withdrew—the dear mindful creature sent a servant soon after, with wine, &c. to refresh us after the fatigue of our journey.

Mr. Irwin drank a bumper to her health, and insisted on my pledging him—need he have insisted?—With difficulty I prevailed on Sir George to follow my example.

We waited near half an hour ere
either of the ladies made their appear-
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ance; and in that time the old gentleman had forced us to assist him in emptying the bottle. Sir George stood much in need of it, to support his spirits in the scene that was to follow.

At last, the door opened, and my sweet sister, pale as death, with wildness in her air, rush'd into the room, and, running to Sir George, cast herself at his feet—"Pardon, O, pardon," cried she, clasping his knees, "dearest, best of men, pardon your penitent, suffering Jenny!"

She hardly had time to utter this, ere she was fervently press'd to his heart. They both wept, and in silence for some time stood lock'd in each other's embrace; but, when his words found utterance, who can express the fond, the tender things he said?

In

In his turn, he implored her pardon — she would not suffer him to proceed on that subject.

He placed her on a couch, and took his seat by her, his arm round her waist. With what tender pity did he gaze on her pale emaciated countenance! that countenance which death itself could not deprive of its various charms!

“ Ah! my dearest love,” said he, sighing, “ what have you not suffered! “ and what an inhuman wretch have I “ been!”

“ Say not so,” cried she, softly pressing his hand, “ I only am to blame; “ but ah! how severely have I lamented “ my folly, my indiscretion! — Am I

“not greatly altered?” continued she, smiling, his eyes compassionately fixed on her face; “indeed I am; but what my person has lost in charms, I trust, my mind has gain’d; and, if I have still the happiness to please you, my tenderly beloved husband, my utmost ambition is satisfied.”

“Then, my angel,” cried he, embracing her, “you may be perfectly satisfied, since neither time nor change can ever diminish my ardent affection for my Jenny.—All I fear, all I regret, is your want of health.”

“There is no cause for fear,” returned she; “I have indeed been ill; but is it possible I should continue so now? I am already recovered. Your
“presence

“presence has restored me to life and
“joy.”

She now found leisure to return my
caresses, and to congratulate me on my
happiness—her dear Louisa too.

O, how tenderly do these two charm-
ing women love each other! I never
heard or saw such an instance of female
friendship.

We began now to be tolerably com-
posed, and sat down to a little elegant
repast, but to which none of us did
justice, except our chearful Mr. Irwin.
But our senses, if not our appetites,
were sufficiently feasted.

How sweetly tender, yet how modest,
was the behaviour of my Louisa! and

how fond, how affectionate, that of Sir George and his Jenny!

My sister is a good deal altered—a good deal fallen away; but, as her form is so uncommonly elegant, and her complexion, though pale, of such a dazzling fairness, it has only rendered her the more delicate, more sweetly feminine; and, after joy had diffused itself over her features, I thought I never saw her look more beautiful—her dress too so plain, so simple.

Sir George gazed on her till his very soul dissolved away in love and rapture.

I could form some judgement of those delightful sensations, by what I myself experienced — but, ah! their happiness is already perfect—mine—O, when will
the

the impatiently-wish'd-for day arrive,
that confirms me in the possession of my
charmer?

I could not restrain a sigh, when we
separated for the night, and I retired to
my solitary apartment.

I arose early this morning—I hardly
closed my eyes all night—joy kept me
awake.—I proposed a ramble ere any of
the family were stirring; but, judge of
my transport, when, sauntering into a
little wood not far from their pretty ha-
bitation, I met the idol of my heart, my
Louisa!

What a delightful walk! she conde-
scendingly leaning on my arm, and now
and then, to divert me from my raptur-
ous endearments, forcing me to observe

the beauties of the place—it is indeed a little Eden, its river of Paradise the Thames.

I know not how long we might have continued our ramble, had not a servant come to tell us Mr. Irwin was impatient for his breakfast.

Louisa blush'd. — “ ’Tis all your fault,” cried she, sweetly smiling, “ teasing creature that you are! Let me go.”

I led her to the house—we received a humorous chiding from Mr. Irwin. “ Though you,” said he, “ a parcel of whining romantic souls, may live upon love, I, let me tell you, require food a little more substantial.”

His

His niece made some pretty apologies, and instantly sat down with her usual vivacity to the tea-table.

Sir George did not leave his apartment till near eleven, nor would he suffer my sister to rise even then. He is quite another man to what he was some days ago.—I never saw such expressions of happiness and joy, as appeared on his countenance.

He pressed my hand.—“Give me joy,
“Westbury: yesterday was my wedding-day, I never before was truly
“united to your lovely sister; this last
“was a union of our hearts, those
“hearts which nothing again can ever
“disunite.”

He staid not long with us, but again returned to his Jenny, and spent the whole day in her apartment, which he would not suffer her to leave.

Her friend and I likewise made her frequent visits.—How fond, how tender, was his behaviour! He administered her medicines (for a physician has attended her some time) with his own hands; tasted her nauseous draughts, that she might take them with less reluctance; hang over her with such endearing assiduity!

Tell your Fanny, she never beheld so engaging a husband, except her own.—How happy are my sisters!—how uncommonly fortunate!

Jenny

Jenny is not in the least danger.—The doctor was surprized, on a visit he just now made her, to find her so much better—but he had all along pronounced it rather a disease of the mind than body. “I foresee,” said he, smiling, “my attendance will be no longer necessary. She has now got a much better physician!”

Sir George, still anxious and doubtful, took him aside; but returned from his conference quite easy and composed.

Surely, Manwaring, all this delightful news will have a happy effect on our dear mother. She already began to mend ere I left her; and this letter, I trust, will greatly forward her recovery.

We are not to return to town till my sister is more in a condition to support the fatigue of the journey.

This indeed is a delightful place, yet am I impatient to leave it; for, till I do, my happiness must continue imperfect.

Mr. Irwin does not fail, in his humorous way, to rally this impatience; and now and then, by some rather free expressions, to excite the sweet modest blushes of my Louisa, which I hide in my enraptured bosom.

But enough of raptures!—Yet you, Harry, though so long a husband, are as full of them as the best of us. Adieu.

LET-

L E T T E R XXXVII.

From the same, to the same.

OUR happy party arrived in town last night, my sister almost perfectly recovered.

This evening a good deal of company came to pay their respects—I wonder how they so soon heard of her return.

Mr. Lesley, Sir George's intimate friend, dined with us, and sincerely partook in our joy.—His aunt proposed a visit in the afternoon.—I was a little uneasy at the thoughts of seeing the amiable Juliet—but there was no avoiding it.

I ob-

I observed my Louisa too was no less concerned—She sigh'd, and look'd with meaning at me.

They came about five—the Colonel too, for whose coming Sir George had prepared his Lady, and even begged for his sake to give him a favorable reception, adding a great many civil things in his praise.

Juliet no sooner beheld my angel, than she ran to her with open arms.

“ Ah! my dearest Louisa, what unexpected pleasure! little did I hope to
“ see you; and how is my dear, dear
“ friend?” embracing her.

They sat together, and talked in a low voice; and I saw the smiling Juliet frequently directing her eyes towards me, so that I guessed I had the honour to be their subject.

The Colonel paid his compliments to Lady Warwick with the utmost respect; and, taking Sir George's hand as he stood near her, whispered something with an air of confusion and humility.

Her behaviour to him was to the highest degree proper, just what I could have wished.

Juliet continued for some time talking to my charmer with vivacity; but at last I observed her colour change (don't think me vain); and, casting a mournful glance
at

at me, sigh'd, complained of a sudden indisposition, and begged her friend to retire with her for a few moments.

Lady Betty was alarmed—it caused a little bustle amongst us—they however suffered the friends to withdraw.—In about a quarter of an hour, they returned.—I could see, by their eyes, they had both been weeping. The truly amiable Juliet had assumed an air of melancholy composure.

I could not resist the impulse of my heart. I forgot every thing but the visible dejection of my angel; and, while the company were congratulating Juliet on her recovery, I seized the dear hand of my Louisa, and softly whispered my sorrow for her sadness.

While

While I still held it, Juliet turned to us. She observed it. She saw my eyes tenderly fixed on her face. She sigh'd, blush'd, and, in a low voice, "I wish you joy, Mr. Westbury; believe me, I rejoice in your happiness, and in that of my Louisa."

She resumed her seat.—I answered only by a low bow, and took mine at some distance.—She hardly spoke during the rest of the evening; every one else was in high spirits—I should except my gentle, sympathizing Louisa.

Lady Warwick has regained all her agreeable vivacity, but without the least tincture of her former levity.

Lady

Lady Betty, you may have heard, is a most amiable sensible woman, and in every respect a valuable friend.

Lesley has a fund of wit and humour. You would have been delighted to have heard him drolly arguing with Mr. Irwin, for the old gentleman is very fond of argument, especially on political subjects.

We divided into little parties. Every one objected to cards.—Mr. Irwin and Lesley—Lady Betty, her two eldest daughters, and my sister—Louisa, Juliet, Sir George, the Colonel, and I—. If I am not mistaken, the Colonel does not behold the sweet Juliet with eyes of indifference.

We

We spent, upon the whole, a most agreeable evening. The utmost harmony and good humour reigned amongst us.—The visible sadness of my pretty young friend indeed cast a little damp on my spirits, and restrained me too from those fond endearments with which I have for some time been accustomed to treat my beloved Louisa.

But O, Harry, not long shall I be tortured with this painful restraint. The day, the exquisitely happy day, is fixed—next Monday—delightful prospect!

Preparations are making with the utmost expedition—Mr. Irwin has made my charmer magnificent presents; and my sister too has been compelled to accept

cept of some, more valuable than either Sir George or she could wish; but he will have his own way. He is not only immensely rich, but uncommonly generous.

My fair one tells me, she has sent a trifle to your Fanny—so she calls it—and begs I, who am so partial to her, would say a good word for her, and endeavour to procure her a place in my sister's esteem.

I do not bespeak it—I challenge it as her due; deny it if you can, or dare, when you have the pleasure of her acquaintance.

Adieu.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

Sir GEORGE to Mr. MANWARING.

YOUR brother is the happiest—no, that I deny—though he says so, he is only *one of the happiest* of men—my felicity is equally perfect.

He was this morning united to his charming Louisa; so you may well suppose he was in no humour for writing; nay, I question whether he will be restored to his sober senses at least for a month to come.—He is half wild with joy and transport.

We

We shall set off for Rose-Hill in a few days. Be so good, my dear Manwaring, as to see that every thing is in order for the reception of my Jenny and her friends.

My friend Lesley and Mr. Irwin are to be of our happy party.

The latter is here. He says, I am wanted below; and offers to finish my letter. I leave it open, that he may do with it what he thinks proper.

Adieu.

MR. IRWIN in Continuation.

I don't know Mr. Manwaring; but I know, if you resemble the rest of your
worthy

worthy family, or rather the family you and I have now the honour to be allied to, you must be an honest man; a title, let me tell you, I never bestow on any but my high favourites; so take it as a compliment.

Let me see. What has this Sir George been scribbling?—There is not one reasonable being in the house but myself. This love has made them all half crazy. All that kind of stuff is over with me; and you, I suppose, have been too long shackled to make such a bustle with your chains as these good folks do. Lord help their foolish heads! as if they were proud of their fetters!

He bids you get every thing in order.—Now I, on the contrary, bid you throw every thing into a joyful confusion.

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sion.—Open his cellars, collect his tenants, set them all to drinking, dancing, and singing.

Let the bells ring, gather together the whole parish, old and young; let me find them all ornamented with favours. Let us be welcomed with acclamations of joy.

My purse-strings are open. They may expect such a shower as seldom rains upon them.

Don't let me see one sad amongst the crowd; I'll have nothing but mirth and jollity:

“ For Ralph of the Mill marries Sue
“ of the Green.”

I shall

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I shall myself be tempted to clear up my pipes, and join in the chorus.

Remember my instructions, as you hope for the continuance of my favour. I am a little testy, I can tell you; so mind what you are about.—My service to your family.

If you was but an old man now, I would challenge you to smoak a pipe with me; but I have got amongst such a set of light-headed boys, that they have almost put my gravity to flight, and made me as great a fool as themselves.

If you was but to see me flirting with Lady Warwick, with whom, by the bye—for the life of you don't tell Sir George, he would be as jealous as the
VOL. II. M devil;

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devil; and no wonder, considering the attractions of his rival—I am more than half in love; nay, for that matter, if I may believe her, so is she with me.

O, 'tis a coaxing little gipsy; and then she is as lively as a bird. I don't wonder she makes such a fond fool of her husband, for she has witchcraft in her eyes; and even my old heart is warmed with so much beauty.

Then there is the noble Captain and his deary, such a pair of turtles—ah! brush up your passion a little, or these husbands will put you quite out of countenance!

Your wife too will die with envy; so will half the wives in the parish; aye, and spinsters too; for I believe such a
pair

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pair of handsome fellows as Sir George and Westbury are hardly to be met with in England.

But fare ye well. They flurry and hurry me to death.

I had a great deal more to say to you, but must attend the tea-table—quite a Lady's man, you find.

Did I give my service to your family?—if not, you may.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient, &c

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